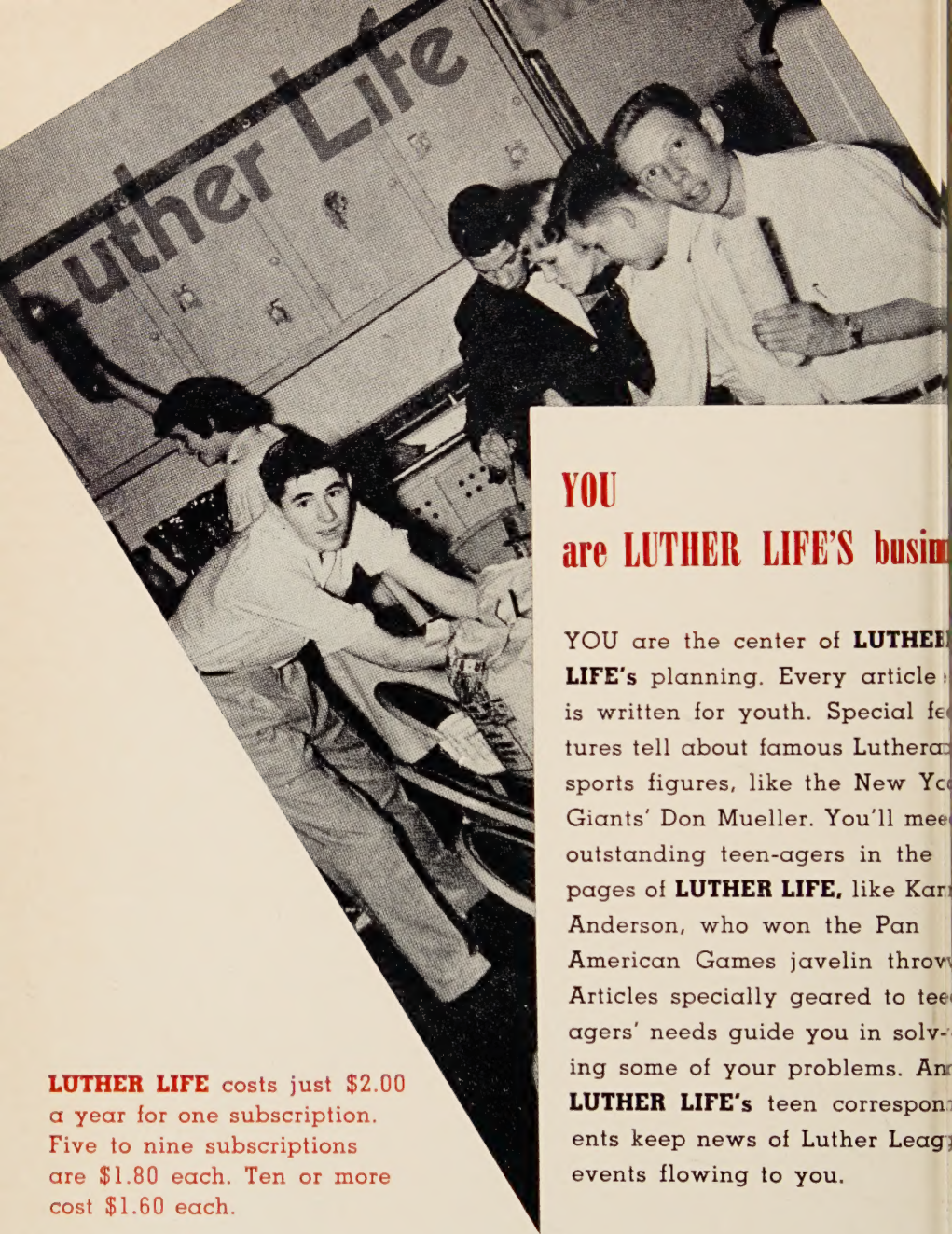


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High Ideals





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High Ideals

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PHILIP R. HOH
EDITOR

Cover Picture

Dale Tjosvold blows a scorching trumpet at the 1955 Luther League of America convention, Ann Arbor, Michigan. An active leaguer at Holy Trinity Lutheran Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, Dale has copped prizes in several contests with his trumpeting.

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Missions is every Christian's business.

O Jesus, I Have Promised

by Charles Masheck

Prescriptions for sick leaguers and a candlelight service of rededication

Hints to the leader

Acquaint yourself with this topic by thoroughly reading it through. You'll notice that the first part is intended to encourage discussion among the leaguers and that the second part is a service of worship and dedication.

The various sections of the program can be assigned to different members of your group so that as many leaguers as possible may share in the presentation. It is best to make these assignments a week in advance. At any rate, the participants should have time to read through their parts at least once.

You will find that discussion will flow much easier if the group is seated in a circle rather than in rows.

It would be more effective if the leaguers were to stand during the candlelight service. Each member should have a candle, to provide light for reading the service. Paper cones wrapped around the bottom of the candles will catch wax drippings and spare your clothes and the floor.

Try to have a copy of *High Ideals* for each member. If this is not possible, provide mimeographed copies of the service. Arrange with the member nearest the light switch to darken the room when the candles are lit.

Worship ideas

HYMNS:

"Give of Your Best to the Master,"

CYH 242

"O Master, Let Me Walk With Thee,"

CYH 195, PSH 288

"Take My Life and Let It Be,"

CYH 249, PSH 278

SCRIPTURE: John 15:1-17

The topic

LEADER: "The service we are going to have tonight will be a little different than usual. In order to explain why we should have such a service I've asked several of our members to present some questions for discussion.

Let's pretend that you are all doctors and that this is your office. The patients coming in to see you are sick Luther leaguers. Something's wrong with most of them, and we'd like to know what you'd prescribe for them.

GRETCHEN: I've been going to Luther League meetings ever since I was old enough to attend. I was president of our league for one year and was elected president of the district league about the same time. After that I was elected vice president of the synodical league.

I'm always happy when I win, but the thrill

- The Rev. Charles Masheck is pastor of Trinity Church, Bellevue, Ky. He is a frequent contributor to educational publications of the United Lutheran Church.

just doesn't last. A few weeks after I'm installed I lose interest in my new position. If there's work to be done, I always get someone else to do it. Each time I'm nominated to a new office I say to myself, "If I get elected this time, I'll turn over a new leaf and really work," but it's the same old story.

I'm beginning to feel uneasy around the members of our league. I tell myself that the others are jealous of me because I'm more popular than they are. But, to be honest, I guess I feel uncomfortable because I've let them down. It's not much fun going to meetings anymore. What can I do? Should I leave the league so that a better worker has a chance?

LEADER: Thank you, Gretchen. Now we'll see if anybody has any suggestions for you.

(Time out for discussion)

JERRY: I go to league meetings when I can have fun. I don't see why I should go for any other reason. There were certain meetings I liked last year—the ice skating party at the Arena, the taffy pull in Magoo's Kitchen, the steak fry in Dillingworth's backyard, the trip to Bear Run State Park and the boat ride we took around Snake Lake. I don't go for topics and hymn singing and prayers. That stuff leaves me cold.

LEADER: Thank you, Jerry. You're really a problem. What do you leaguers prescribe for Jerry's condition?

(Time out for discussion)

MARGUERITE: I go to league because my parents make me go. They think I'll be safe there and won't get into any trouble. Sometimes I sneak and go to a movie. My folks irritate me by constantly pointing out what a fine boy Jim is or what a sweet girl Millie is, just because they go to Luther League!

LEADER: What's wrong with Marguerite, doctors? Or is the trouble with Marguerite?

(Time out for discussion)

DAVID: Why all this talk about what's wrong with the Luther League? The only thing wrong with it, as far as I can see, is some of the people who belong. Matt Jenkins, a pal of mine, asked me to go to league with him four years ago, and I've been going ever since. I wouldn't think of missing.

I've never been elected to any office higher than treasurer, but that's all right with me. You have to be a good follower before you can be a good leader. I'm a leaguer because I'm a Christian and want to be with other Christians who are about my age. I believe that a Christian tries to do his best wherever he is, whatever group he belongs to, and

that he'll do his fair share and try to win others.

LEADER: O. K., Dave. Why would you leaguers like to have somebody like David in your group?

(Time out for discussion)

The candlelight service

LEADER: Now it is time for our service of dedication. Dave was a good leaguer because he felt that he belonged to Christ. He was glad to belong and others were glad to be in the league with him. Marguerite, Jerry, and Gretchen all showed that they weren't really dedicated to Christ. They won't be happy until they are. We won't be happy either unless we are dedicated. Now, if you'll light your candles, we'll turn out the lights and worship together.

ALL *(reading together)*:

"O Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end;

Be thou forever near me, my Master and my Friend!

I shall not fear the battle, if thou art by my side,

Nor wander from the pathway, if thou wilt be my guide."

FIRST READER: At confirmation all of us pledged to be faithful to our Lord Jesus. We promised that we would attend church, listen to God's word, read the Bible regularly, and commune as often as possible.

Do you remember the questions you were asked? There were six of them. Will you remind yourself of your pledge as I ask them again? "Dost thou renounce the devil, and all his works, and all his ways?"

ALL: Yes, I renounce.

FIRST READER: Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty?

ALL: I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth.

FIRST READER: Dost thou believe in Jesus Christ?

ALL: I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; he descended into hell; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

FIRST READER: Dost thou believe in the Holy Ghost?

ALL: I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy Christian church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrec-



"Do you renounce, believe . . . ?" Will the vows of your confirmation be kept or broken?

tion of the body; and the life everlasting.

FIRST READER: Dost thou promise to abide in this faith?

ALL: Yes, by the help of God.

FIRST READER: Dost thou promise, as a member of the Evangelical Lutheran church, to remain faithful to its teachings and to be diligent in the use of the means of grace?

ALL: Yes, by the help of God.

FIRST READER: With these words you dedicated your life to Christ. You belong to him and he belongs to you.

ALL:

O let me feel thee near me—the world is ever near;

see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear;

My foes are ever near me, around me and

within;

But Jesus, draw thou nearer and shield my soul from sin."

SECOND READER:

Speak to us, O Lord, in the silence of this hour.

Reveal to us how we may help thee in thy work in the world.

Feed our souls that we may take the Bread of Life to the hungry.

Enlighten our footsteps that we may bring the Light of the world into the darkness of our day.

THIRD READER:

"Be in our minds, and in our thinking,

Be in our eyes, and in our looking,

Be in our mouths, and in our speaking,

Be in our hearts, and in our understanding,

Be in our lives, and at our departing,
In the name of Christ."

ALL: Amen.

FOURTH READER: "I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for me?'"

ALL: "Here am I. Send me."

FOURTH READER: "Three times in the silence of the evening the voice of God called to Samuel."

ALL: "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

FOURTH READER: "And Joshua said to the children of Israel, 'Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.'"

ALL: "As for me, I will serve the Lord."

THIRD READER: Give unto us, O Lord, that quietness of mind in which we can hear thee speaking to us.

ALL: Amen.

THIRD READER:

"O let me hear thee speaking in accents dear and still,
Above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will!

O, speak to reassure me, to hasten or control!
O speak, and make me listen, thou guardian of my soul!"

ALL: Amen.

FIFTH READER: To the surrender of ourselves to thee, O Christ,

ALL: We dedicate ourselves.

FIFTH READER:

To the service of God,

To the service of his church,

To the service of all those in need,

ALL: We dedicate ourselves.

FIFTH READER:

To bearing one another's burdens,

To taking up our cross and following Christ,

To sharing with others the privileges we enjoy

To witnessing to all those we meet.

ALL: We dedicate ourselves.

THIRD READER: O thou in whom we live and move and have our being, we offer and present unto thee our souls and our bodies, our thoughts and our desires, our words and our deeds, to be a living sacrifice. Teach us to



give and not to count the cost; to fight and not to heed the wounds; to toil and not to seek for rest; to labor and ask no reward; save that of knowing that we do thy will through Jesus Christ our Lord.

ALL: Amen.

ALL: (*The group may either say or sing the following*)

"O Jesus, thou hast promised to all who follow thee,

That where thou art in glory there shall thy servant be;

And, Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end;

O give me grace to follow, my Master and my Friend."

LEADER: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.

(*The service may be concluded by the singing of "O Christians, Leagued Together."*)

CYH 236, PSH 294.)

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What is God Like?

All peoples have wondered
The followers of Jesus know the answer



The topic

We build our lives about the picture of God we hold. When we were children, we thought about God the way children do, with the immature notions that a child has. Now we're growing up. We need grown-up ideas, too.

One of this country's brightest lawyers, Clarence Darrow, viciously attacked the Bible and most Christianity simply because he never bothered to find out whether the church had mature ideas as well as the ones he had learned in early Sunday School.

Many college students throw out all religion simply because the only faith they know is one they held in kindergarten. Of course such childish concepts won't make the grade in a more mature world. You probably don't believe in Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny any more, but let's hope you've discovered by now that there's a good deal more to Christmas and Easter than those make-believe characters.

Many leaguers still hold to Santa Claus type ideas about God. The purpose of this topic is to awake such as these to what they've been missing and to help us "enlightened" ones to gain even greater appreciation of what is available for our growing faith.

Vickie's God

Vickie, age six, is a good illustration of the type of idea children have about God. Vickie had a particularly wonderful playmate, an invisible person with fascinating magical abilities. She talked to him by the hour.

"Who is it?" her mother asked.

"God," said Vickie. "And," she added, "He lives on the roof."

To Vickie—and to most of us at one time—it was that simple. He lived on the roof, near her, where he could play with her and watch over her. He had to be near or he couldn't hear her prayers. The roof, Vickie thought, was a comfortable spot. Maybe God huddled up against the chimney when he got cold.

Vickie is thirteen now. If she remembers her old idea of God at all, she probably starts giggling. Vickie has changed a lot in seven years. Just what does she—and the rest of us—think about God now?

Some questions

Here is a multiple-choice test. Have leaguers select the words which best complete the sentence.

1. God has (one, two, three) persons.



"He that hath seen me hath seen the Father," said Jesus. We know God through Christ.

2. Christians believe in (one, two, three) god(s).

3. Christians receive their greatest ideas about God through (revelation, scientific theories, careful reasoning).

4. The chief source of information about God and his work is found in (Luther's *Catechism*, the hymnal, Bible).

5. The Old Testament reveals God chiefly as (father, love, creator).

6. We know God best through (nature, history, Christ).

7. Christ revealed God chiefly as (father, judge, creator).

8. Man can approach God accurately through (the Virgin Mary, the saints, Christ).

9. If we say that God is infinite, we mean he is (boundless, limited, good).

10. God is really god of (Lutherans only, Christians only, everyone).

Answers: 1. three 2. one God 3. revelation 4. Bible 5. creator 6. Christ 7. father 8. Christ 9. boundless 10. everyone.

These questions were really easy. Leaguers should have gotten all of them right.

This isn't God

In order to understand God better, it is wise to look at some of the wrong notions people hold. To many, God is a big Santa



The Creation of Adam by Michelangelo is one of the few works of art portraying God.

Claus. He'll give us anything we ask for, if we ask hard enough. Years ago we prayed for a new doll or some roller skates. Now we have outgrown that. Now we pray for a car, good weather for a date night, better grades in school.

Surely, God answers our prayers, but not always the way we expected. He gives us what is good for us, not necessarily what we want. Many people want God to be their super errand-boy. If he doesn't do what they wanted, they try to drop him from their lives.

The facts are, that we are here as part of his plan. If anybody is going to be an errand-boy, it's us, not God. But God has more important things in mind for us than errand-boy work. Strange that we often have nothing more important in mind for God to do!

Lots of other people want God to be a super mother for them. Kiss their hurts away, protect them from the big bad world! They join churches so they can have rest and quietness, peace and security—be lazy.

Certainly God loves children. Certainly God does protect us in many ways. But like any intelligent parent, God wants us to grow up. He is most proud of us, we believe, when we pull through a tough situation, face the problems of life courageously, work hard in our churches, and—asking his help, and getting it—win the battles. If we fail, he still loves us. But Christ made it perfectly plain that God has little use for a lazy, complacent individual.

Afraid of God

How about the fearsome pictures of God that many people carry? God, the detective, all-seeing, all-knowing, ready to pounce on the slightest misdeed. He's always there, eager to stir up our consciences so we'll confess all, and so he can punish us thoroughly.

Sure, God knows all about us, knows more than we do, infinitely more. And, goodness knows, our consciences can use some proddings. But he doesn't work us over so he can punish us, but that we can find a better life and eventually be happier children of his. What's more, much more, when we've learned our lesson, he forgives us, without punishment. If he does punish us, then it is because his punishment will be better for us than if we went on without it. Like slapping a baby's hands when he touches an electric socket!

Another popular misconception about God is that he is like a remote king. He sits up in the seventh heaven—wherever that is, issuing orders to his farflung kingdom. Actually he doesn't give a hoot about his millions of subjects and their petty problems.

When we realize the vastness of this universe and remember that there may be other universes, too, it is easy to see God as too big to care about us. But through Jesus we correct that false idea. God does care—about sparrows that fall, sheep that stray, flowers in the fields, sons that are lost, about us and our problems.

There are probably as many wrong ideas about God afloat as there are people alive. One more of many we could discuss: The idea that God made the world and then left it to go on by itself. This is called *Deism*. It is

convenient way of getting rid of God, so you don't have to obey him or worry about our wrong desires. Of course you can't get rid of God by ignoring him. God could get rid of you by that method, but it won't work the other way around. We're lucky it doesn't, though not everyone is awake to that fact.

So much for popular errors in thinking about God. Here are some words Christians have traditionally used to express their correct ideas about him. How many could the paguers define correctly?

Some definitions

Omnipotent: God can do everything and anything he wants to. He is all-powerful, incalculable. He who created all, *can* control all. (Psalm 115:3; 135:6)

Omniscient: God knows everything. (I Samuel 2:3). There is absolutely nothing that can be kept hidden from God. As Jesus said, God knows even the number of hairs on our head, and of course knows far more complicated things than that. He who created all, naturally must know all. Furthermore, he is *concerned* about all. (Ephesians 1:4; Psalm 100:2).

Omnipresent: Space does not limit God. He can be all over at the same time, is not physically limited as we are. Also, he is intimately connected with his creation so that all things, whether they realize it or not, live and move in him, and in him have their being. (Acts 17:28; Colossians 1:17).

Transcendent: God is free of and superior to all earthly, material things. Nothing can contain him. Nothing can limit him (even our feeble definitions). He has a different quality (not just quantity) from all else. He is God. (I Kings 8:27; Job 11:8-10).

Infinite: Again, God is limitless. His abilities are unending. He has all power, all wisdom, all presence, all time: (Psalm 145:3; 147:5).

Eternal: God is without beginning or end, beyond our limitations in this time-bound existence. (Psalm 90; II Peter 3).

Holy: God's thinking and doing are not cluttered up with confused motives, nor are their any wrong thoughts or actions. God is the standard by which we know what right and good are. Anything less than God contains imperfection, probably evil or wrong. Therefore God alone is holy. People who think God may have made a mistake have, at that moment, put up their ideas as superior to God's! (I Peter 1:16; Exodus 20:26; Psalm 145: 17).

Love: God freely made, cherishes, and sustains man. He has attached himself emotionally to us. For some reason) (not clear to us) he loves us. It is one of his characteristics, to us possibly the most important. (John 3:16; 15:9, 13; Romans 8; I John 4:8-10; Ephesians 5:25).

These are only a few of the traditional words used to explain our ideas about the nature of God. There are many more.

The Trinity

Christians are Trinitarians. They believe in the Trinity. That means—and it's never easy to explain—that we have come to know God in three separate yet related ways.

We know God through his creation as Father, through his revelation of himself in human form as Son, and through his activity in the hearts and lives of his children as Holy Spirit. Each of these three we call a person of God, which is a special use of that word.

All three persons of the Trinity are so important that it would be absurd to place one above the others, yet to most of us Jesus, as the Son of God, is the easiest to grasp and becomes most real for us. For many Christians, Jesus is God and all they know of God. Jesus certainly is God, but the Christ was the *Son* of God and only one of the three persons of the Trinity.

If all this sounds complicated and confusing, don't be discouraged. The best minds have never seen it any too clearly. It is a mystery, but nonetheless true.

Beginning to jell

From baptism till death we must keep trying to complete our picture of God. Probably only when we "see him face to face" will the search be over. Until then, the question, "What is God like?" should occupy the lion's share of our time.

By now our ideas about God should be beginning to jell. We are beginning to put our thoughts into words. The various pictures we have held in our minds should begin to fit together. Wrong notions should be discarded. Now is the time for house-cleaning.

Now come the days when we are overwhelmed with science and all easily demonstrated forms of knowledge. We are tempted to forget about revelation, tempted to forget how little the universe is, how big God is.

Yet if we keep working at our faith, giving God time to talk to us, learning from more mature Christians what they have found to be true, then we begin to see God as he really

is. He becomes the guide and center of our lives. We offer him all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. We want to; he is God.

What God is like each man must discover in his own faith, in his own life—and then realize that God is far, far greater than the greatest of us can know.

To the leader

The topic is so arranged that it can be presented in several ways. In presenting the attributes of God (omnipotent, eternal, etc.) divide them up among the leaguers beforehand, and have each one do some homework on his particular word. Each leaguer might be called on to define and illustrate the word assigned him.

The various misconceptions about God can also be parcelled out. Telling of childhood conceptions of God might prove interesting, too. Be sure to emphasize that no matter what we now believe, we have always much more to learn.

Extra things to do

Prepare a panel discussion as a follow-up for the topic. Discuss arguments for the existence of God. Show how our ideas of God relate themselves to the kind of life we live.

Worship ideas

CALL TO WORSHIP: O come, let us worship and bow down.

Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

HYMNS: CYH 289, 200, 297. CSB 158, 162, 164

PSALM: 8, 67

PRAYER: Pray the words to "Lead on, O King Eternal", PSH 290.

Appropriate scripture

The following verses may be assigned to leaguers before the meeting. During the session they may be read and interpreted as they lie in.

1. Psalm 115:3; 135:6. (*omnipotent*); I Sam. 2:3 (*omniscient*); 3. Ephesians 1:3 (*omnipresent*); 4. Acts 17:28; 1:1 (*omnipotent*); 5. I Kings 8:27; Job 11:8-11 (*transcendent*); 6. Psalm 145:3; 147:5 (*infinite*); 7. Psalm 90; II Peter 3 (*eternal*); 8. I Peter 1:16; Exodus 20:26; Psalm 145:1 (*holiness*); and 9. John 3:16; 15:9, 13; Roman 8; John 4:8-10; Ephesians 5:25 (*Love*).

WORD MATCHING CONTEST:

1. Eternal
2. Infinite
3. Omnipresent
4. Omniscience
5. Omnipotent
6. Jesus Christ
7. Trinity
8. Monotheism

- a. timeless
- b. all-knowing
- c. one God
- d. existing forever
- e. Three persons; one Godhead
- f. everpresent
- g. God in the flesh
- h. all-powerful

(ANSWERS: 1-d. 2-a. 3-f. 4-b. 5-h. 6-g. 7-c. 8-c.)

● It was Easter Sunday at Washington's immense national Episcopal cathedral. The sonorous music, the heavy fragrance of lilies, the close-packed throng took a not-unexpected toll. A choir boy fainted, was carried gently out a side door. Up front, a woman crumpled to her seat, was lugged out by perspiring ushers. More people should take First Aid, I mused, fresh from a Red Cross course. If they'd just put their heads between their knees . . .

Suddenly the gentleman next to me slumped to the floor, groped heavily for the support of the prayer bench. Quickly I knelt beside him.

"Put your head between your knees," I hissed. "You'll feel better if the blood can get to your head." Placing a firm hand on his balding head, I pushed him down—hard. On his other side his wife, obviously a shallow woman, was convulsed with amusement, did nothing to help him—or me—in the dilemma. The man twisted, objecting strenuously to my muscular hold. Quite audibly, between the *Benedictus* and the *Jubilate Deo*, he snapped:

"Lady, I am trying to retrieve my hat!"—Lenore Amerman.

Ways That God Speaks Today

by Herbert N. Gibney

God talks to us in many ways.

The important thing is to listen.

Leads for the leader

The purpose of this topic is to acquaint the group with the various ways by which God is constantly trying to address us, so that we may be better prepared to hear him.

The well-prepared leader will not read the topic at the meeting, but will have studied it in advance and be prepared to present it in his own words. If you are less ambitious, read the topic slowly before the meeting and, when you present the material, use the printed page as an outline.

A discussion method of presentation might be best. After a brief introduction lead into the listing of the ways by which God speaks—before and after Jesus' appearance on earth. Two lists are given as examples. You should not use them unless necessary. Ask the leaguers to contribute their own suggestions. Then use the printed lists to complete what the gang has offered. Write the different methods on a blackboard or on large sheets of paper. The group should have the lists before them as they discuss God's means of communication.

When you feel that your lists are as complete as you can make them, ask the leaguers why they have suggested these methods and how God uses them. Similar information for the methods in the printed lists is contained in the topic material.

If the group is large enough you might wish to divide into "buzz" circles. About four persons in each circle should be enough.

depending on the number present.

Give each group one or two methods from your lists. You can supply them with the topic material on these methods or let them discuss it on their own. Appoint a leader for each group who will report on its findings. Give them about 15 minutes for discussion and then call them all together. The leaders should report on the findings of their group. After each report the entire league should be encouraged to add further thoughts.

If time permits, or perhaps at a later meeting, a follow-up discussion might be held concerning the various modes of Christian worship. This is only briefly mentioned in the topic material. If God communicates with us in various ways, it is understandable that our communication with him in worship will be varied also.

Maybe some members will tell of their worship experiences in other churches. Try not to let this remain on the level of the curious, but lead the leaguers to an appreciation of why people express their religious feelings in different ways. Trips to other churches would be a worthwhile project after a good understanding has been reached.

• The Rev. Herbert N. Gibney is pastor of Epiphany Church, Hempstead, N. Y.

For worship

HYMNS: PSH 223, 149

PSALMS: 8, 19

SCRIPTURE: Acts 17:22-31; I Kings 19:4-12

BEFORE JESUS' BIRTH

1. Through nature
2. Through prophets
3. Through history
4. Through written word
(the Old Testament)
5. Through prayer
6. Through direct conversation
7. Through the Holy Spirit

AFTER JESUS' BIRTH

1. Through nature
2. Through modern prophets
3. Through history
4. Through written word
(the Old and New Testaments)
5. Through prayer
6. Through the Holy Spirit
7. Through Jesus
8. Through the sacraments
9. Through the projected word
(motion pictures, television)

The topic

One of the things that you have all studied in school is the development of the means of communication. First came signs or pictures. Then, as a written language developed, letters were composed. The American Indians used smoke signals. African natives beat out their messages on drums. Much later came such inventions as the telegraph, telephone, radio, and television.

These are some of the means used by men to communicate with other men. But have you thought of the means that God uses to speak to us? God is so much greater than we are that we could never find out all about him through our own searching. He must tell us what he is like and all of the other things he wants us to know.

God speaks to men in many different ways. Just as there has been a development in the means of human communication, so there have been new ways used by God through the years as he speaks to us.

Let's try to discover how God communicates with us. We can begin by making two lists. The first one should contain all the ways you can think of in which God spoke to people in the days before Jesus came to earth. The other list should note all of the

ways that God uses to speak to us right now.

These lists certainly do not include every way God uses to communicate with us. Let's see, however, what each of these means.

God speaks through nature. The man who wrote the 19th Psalm expressed this in these words, "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament sheweth his handiwork. Day unto day uttereth speech and night unto night sheweth knowledge." We believe that God has made everything. Therefore when we are particularly impressed by something in nature it seems to tell us about God. Maybe it reminds us of God's power, as when we look at Niagara Falls. Or perhaps it speaks of his glory when we view a beautiful sunset. Again it may impress us with God's knowledge when we peer at a microscopic form and see its complicated construction.

You ought to read of the experience that the prophet Elijah had. The first Book of Kings, chapter 19, verses 9-18, tells of Elijah alone on a mountain. While he experienced such unusual natural phenomena as an earthquake, a great windstorm, and a fire, it was only after all these had subsided that he heard God speak to him in a still, small voice. Many Christians have had similar experiences. When alone in the woods, on water, on a mountain, or by the seashore they seem to feel very close to God and are sometimes better prepared to hear God's message to them. No wonder this appears on both lists.

One word of caution: Don't go so far as to say that God is merely Nature. That is known as pantheism. (Look this up in the dictionary, then ask your pastor more about it.)

God speaks through prophets. The Old Testament tells of many men known as prophets—Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos, Hosea and Daniel are a few of them. Most folk think that a prophet's main job is to predict what will happen in the future. Actually the word prophet, in the religious sense, means someone who speaks for God. You might call them God's mouthpieces.

We have modern prophets too. Every pastor is one when he preaches God's Word. The prophet's message isn't his own. It is God's message and he is merely the person used to say it.

God speaks through history. Many books of the Bible are really history books. The books of Kings, Samuel, and Chronicles are the best known ones in the Old Testament. The book of Acts is the outstanding New Testament historical book.

As you read of what happened to men and women in days gone by, the good things and the bad, the way they followed God's teachings or refused to follow them, you begin to see how God is active in men's lives. What we today call current events is merely brand new history. God uses the men and women who make history, even the bad ones, to show us his will and way.

God speaks through the written word. We all know that God talks to us through the Bible. The advantage that we have over those who lived before Jesus is that we have a more complete Bible. We must also know, however, that this written word of the Bible can be proclaimed in several different ways. It is done through preaching and teaching. It can be done through plays or drama. Today we can hear such dramatic presentations of God's Word on the radio and see it in motion pictures or on television.

God spoke directly to some men and women. In the Bible we frequently read of God's talking to a person. Read the account of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden for an example. We do not know of many, if any, instances of this happening today. Christians, however, believe that the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Ghost, speaks within the hearts of men and women, telling them what they must know and giving them guidance in their lives.

Most of all, *God speaks through Jesus.* Jesus is God's only Son. He came to this world to show us what God is like. Christians believe that they receive the clearest message about God through Jesus Christ. Whenever Jesus does something or says something we can say, "God is like that."

A five-year-old boy was talking to a 10-year-old boy. The five-year-old said he wondered how God could love both good people and bad people. Then the 10-year-old told him the story of Zaccheus, the money-grabbing tax collector. (You can read the story in the 19th chapter of St. Luke.) It tells of how Jesus loved Zaccheus even though he was a very dishonest man.

The five-year-old then said, "But—but that was Jesus. That wasn't God."

"Oh," said the 10-year-old, "but you know Jesus was God's boy, don't you? Well, don't you suppose he'd take after his Father?"

And that's just the point. Jesus did take after his Father. He and his Father are one. Therefore, everything about Jesus speaks to us of God.

Jesus gave us a very special way of God's speaking to us. It is the sacrament of Holy

Communion. When a Christian receives the bread and wine at the service of Holy Communion Jesus comes into him and speaks to him and guides him. Jesus assures him through this sacrament that his sins are forgiven.

There is only one God and only one Son, Jesus Christ. But God does speak to us in many different ways. All of these ways can really be summed up under two headings, *the Word of God and the Sacraments*. God uses these two means to give us his word of love. And today God has used quite a few new things, new to us that is, to convey his Word to us.

Some people can solve an arithmetic problem if you just tell them what it is. Other people have to write down the numbers. Still others may need to draw some pictures before the solution is clear to them. People are not alike. If you want a group of people to learn something or to do something you will have to get your message across in several different ways. So God deals with us. He knows we are not alike. He knows that some of us will understand him through one means and others will have to have another method.

We can even see this in the different ways that people worship God. Some need to have a very elaborate ritual in their church services. Others, like the Quakers, do not want any ritual at all. In between these two extremes are many different ways of worship. God is very loving and very patient with us. He knows that because of our differences we shall need to hear him in various ways. The way does not matter so long as his message is preserved in all of its truth and not changed around by men.

God speaks to us today in many ways. But we can plug up our ears so that we do not hear. Elizabeth Barrett Browning put it like this.

Earth's crammed with heaven,
And every common bush afire with God;
But only he who sees takes off his shoes;
The rest sit around it and pluck blackberries.

Are you keeping your eyes and ears open to God?

Remember that above everything else, God speaks to us through Jesus. Nothing can top the message that God gives us through his Son. This is what the writer of the book of Hebrews meant when he said in the opening verses of the first chapter, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things."

YOU ARE THERE

Short survey of Luther League of America missionary projects

100 MILLION DOLLARS GO AROUND THE WORLD

THE WORLD

by William J. Ducker

Attention: Leader

This program may take the form of a make-believe radio broadcast. "Church World News" is the suggested title. Dick Sutcliffe, from the United Lutheran Church's Department of Press, Radio, and Television, is the commentator to be imitated.

A "studio" visit may be arranged. In this case, microphones or reasonable facsimiles should be set up at the proper places for the announcer and the commentator and his guest. Broadcasting signs may be appropriately used to indicate "Silence," "On the air," etc. This may be worked up as elaborately or as simply as local circumstances make desirable.

Or the program may be designed as a telecast. In this case, the stage or platform should be arranged to look as much like a giant television screen as possible.

The broadcast

DIRECTOR: Thirty seconds 'till air time. Stand by to go on the air in 30 seconds. (*He counts off on his watch. Then he points to the announcer at mike one.*) Ten seconds . . . five seconds . . . we're on the air.

ANNOUNCER: "Church World News" comes to you today through the courtesy of the Luther League of . . . Richard Sutcliffe has as his guest the Rev. William J. Ducker, former associate secretary of the Luther League of America. Together they will take a quick look at missionary projects the youth of the United Lutheran Church have supported through the years.

Here's Dick Sutcliffe.

SUTCLIFFE: Good evening, everyone. Our guest today is one whose long friendship with youth makes him an ideal person to tell of the missionary projects of the Luther League of America from the beginning. He was on the staff of the youth auxiliary in the decade of 1940-1950, but for years before that he was an active leaguer at various levels of the organization's work. It is good to have you here, Pastor Ducker.

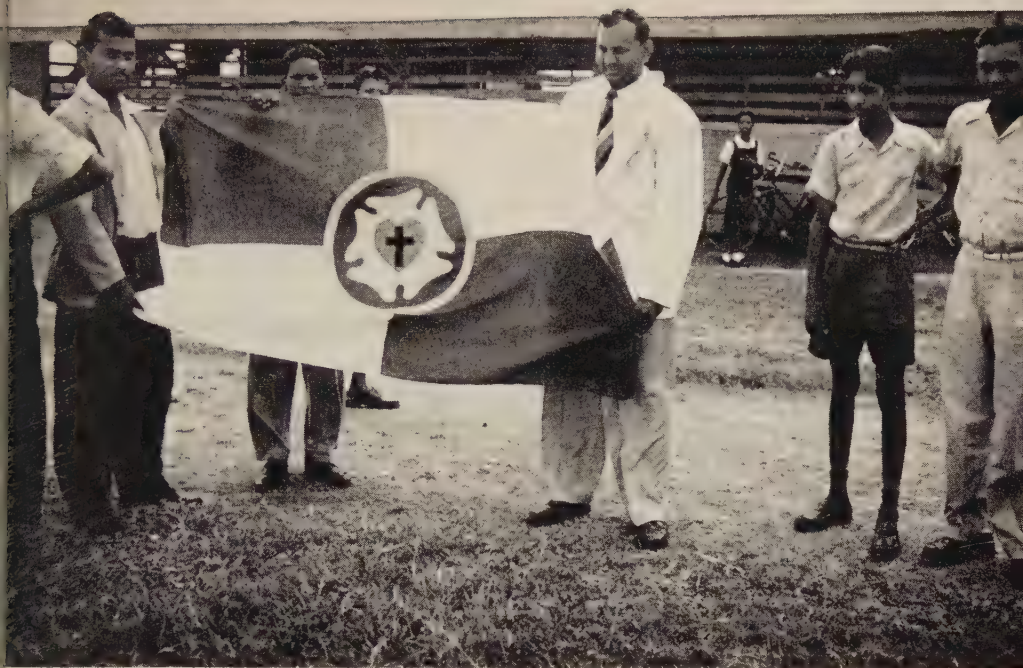
DUCKER: It's good to be here.

SUTCLIFFE: The Luther League of America, I believe, was organized in Pittsburgh, Pa., in 1895. Did it have a missionary project from the beginning?

DUCKER: No, Dick. But there was a specific reason. When the Luther League was organized it sought to serve all the Lutheran bodies in the United States and Canada. Since it was not officially connected with any one Lutheran church its program was basically educational.

SUTCLIFFE: When did the Luther League of America become the official youth organization of the United Lutheran Church in America?

DUCKER: At the second convention of the United Lutheran Church. It was held in Washington, D.C., in 1920. By then most of the other then-existing Lutheran churches had organized separate youth organizations under their own direction. The majority of them did retain the name Luther League for their auxiliaries.



Principal of Skeldon High School (center) holds Luther League banner. This school in British Guiana was the LLA 1946-49 project. Temporary school is in the background.

SUTCLIFFE: Was it, then, in 1920, that missionary projects were adopted by the Luther League of America.

DUCKER: No, that did not come until the Milwaukee convention of LLA in 1925. A missionary department, however, had been set up before that under the guidance of the United Lutheran Church's Committee on Associations for Young People.

SUTCLIFFE: What was chosen as the first project? How was it selected?

DUCKER: The Luther League's general secretary contacted the church's Board of Foreign Missions for a suggestion. That suggestion was then formally approved by the ULC's Executive Board before it was presented to the Milwaukee convention. That takes care of how it was selected.

The Foreign Board was then in the process of developing a small college in India into a first-class Christian college. The board asked leaguers to help. The young people responded by setting a \$25,000 goal.

SUTCLIFFE: You can always count on the enthusiasm of young people, can't you? Wasn't that a big sum for the Luther League to shoot at in a two-year period? Tell me, was the goal actually reached in the time set?

DUCKER: It was. In fact, by the time of the convention held in Salisbury, N. C., in July of 1927, the goal had been exceeded. Only in the lush times of the last few years, I believe, has so large a sum been raised in so short a time for any other project. You see, the Great Depression of 1929-1939 and World War II lay ahead. Both of these events played havoc with the membership and the finances of the Luther League.

SUTCLIFFE: How soon did the new buildings go up in India?

DUCKER: The Foreign Board had hoped to make the enlarged college something in which all Protestant missions in that area of India could cooperate. The groups, however, could not agree on a common location, so our board selected Guntur as the place. Permanent structures were built there. Nevertheless, it was not until 1940 that the administration building and assembly hall were completed. By that time interest on the funds given by Luther leaguers had made it considerably larger than the \$31,000 originally given to the Board in 1928. We know the college today as Andhra Christian College.

SUTCLIFFE: Has the Luther League's interest in India continued?

DUCKER: Yes, indeed. In the 1941-1943 biennium, LLA adopted Luthergiri (Hill of Luther) Theological Seminary, near Rajahmundry, as its project. More than \$12,000 was given to improve the physical equipment of the school.

SUTCLIFFE: Was there any stated plan as to the projects that would be adopted from biennium to biennium, Pastor Ducker?

DUCKER: The only provision was that the suggestion for the project had to come from one of the ULC boards and be approved by the ULC Executive Board before being presented to the Luther League convention. As we look back over the years, however, it is clear that Foreign Board projects were favored by the young people.

SUTCLIFFE: Did the Board of American Missions ever have suggestions to offer?

DUCKER: Indeed, they did! The first was in 1929. At that time the Board of American Missions had turned its attention to the development of work in Puerto Rico. The most pressing need seemed to be for a training school for Christian workers. Within the next two years leaguers gave \$25,000 to build a school at Monteflores. The building was dedicated in the winter of 1932. More than 50 people from the States went for the service.

The building provided a chapel, kindergarten, training school for Sunday school teachers and parish workers, a retreat for mission-

aries, a library, and an office, as well as a sizeable parsonage. Today the property is no longer used as a school. It does continue, however, to serve the local congregation.

While talking about Puerto Rico, I shall mention Puerto Nuevo. Today's leaguers should be familiar with the fact that they just gave a check for \$32,344 to help build a new church there. This was the two-year project for 1953-1955.

SUTCLIFFE: Did any other projects result from suggestions of the Board of American Missions, Pastor Ducker?

DUCKER: Oh, yes! The 1937 convention in Springfield, Ohio, voted to build a medical center at Konnarock, Va. It was to minister to the needs of the mountain folk of southwestern Virginia. Approximately \$13,000 was given for this purpose. The center has rendered distinguished service for the last 15 years under the able leadership of Dr. and Mrs. Heinz Meyer. They were themselves refugees from Hitler's Germany.

And in 1949-1951 leaguers gave almost \$29,000 for St. Paul's Lutheran Church in the Kaimuki section of Honolulu, Hawaii.

SUTCLIFFE: In 1951-1953 leaguers gave almost \$30,000 toward a project in Argentina. Was that the first time, Pastor Ducker, that LLA had centered its attention on the South American continent?

DUCKER: No, indeed! The second project

Seminary buildings, Buenos Aires, 1951-53 project.





Interior of Tai Tung Chen Church, Tsingtao, China, part of the 1935-37 Luther League project.

ever adopted by the Luther League of America was in Argentina. That was in 1927. Within the next two years leaguers gave \$12,000 to build Luther League Hall at the Evangelical Institute, Villa del Parque, Buenos Aires. At that time it operated as an elementary and high school. Today it concentrates on grades one through eight. It has an enrollment of 600.

The 1951-1953 project that you mentioned was used to help build a school to train ministers for the South American continent. The building was dedicated in late 1955 and is now in use.

SUTCLIFFE: If I remember correctly, Luther League leaders used to boast that the organization had erected at least one lighthouse in every one of the foreign mission fields of the ULC.

DUCKER: This was true until the United Lutheran Church recently opened a new field in Malaya. All other ULC fields, including China, Japan, and Africa, have been aided by the Luther League of America.

SUTCLIFFE: Tell us about China.

DUCKER: Until we entered Malaya, our church's newest mission area was the Shan-

tung Province of China. We took over this field from the Berlin (Germany) Missionary Society after World War I. The Germans had done good work there. But the years of war and the post-war poverty in Germany had made it impossible for them to keep the mission going in their customary way. Our Foreign Missions Board asked LLA to help extend the work.

In 1935 delegates to the Charleston, S. C., convention of the Luther League voted to raise funds to build a church, a dispensary, a school, and a social center. Though this was the depression era, leaguers did raise almost \$12,000 within the next two years.

It was known as the Tai Tung Chen (*Ti-dung-jen*) project. It was located in the industrial area of the port city of Tsingtao (*Ching-dow*). This ambitious building program was never really completed, due to the wars and the Communist occupation. But the fine St. Paul's Lutheran Church now stands there as a monument to our missionary endeavor. We hope that it still serves in Christ's name today.

Shortly after World War II, China and our Shantung Mission came in for some addi-



First missionary project of the Luther League of America, the administration building at the Andhra Christian College, Guntur, India. Over \$30,000 was given by leaguers for this project.

tional consideration by the Luther League of America. The most pressing need of the mission, besides building repairs to war-damaged structures, was for personnel. At its golden jubilee convention in Pittsburgh in 1946, LLA voted to raise funds and secure a person to go to China for service as a short-term missionary. The money was raised in due time. Eilene Ufkes, then of St. Louis, Mo., was sent as a short-term missionary. She served chiefly as a typist and an instructor in music.

It should be noted, however, that the missionary project of the years 1946-1949 was a dual one. The golden jubilee convention had to be postponed from 1945, the anniversary year, to 1946. This threw the convention cycle out of kilter. So 1949 was set as the next convention year and the dual project, known as China-Skeldon, was adopted for the three-year period.

SUTCLIFFE: We have heard about the China part of that dual project. Tell us about the Skeldon part.

DUCKER: The Skeldon part of the project turns our attention to South America again. Three of the LLA missionary projects have been erected there.

Skeldon is in British Guiana. It is in the sugar plantation section about 45 miles from New Amsterdam. The money given by leaguers then will be used soon to construct a permanent high school building. It will contain eight classrooms and will accommodate about 220 pupils. The long delay in construction of the permanent building has been caused by the church's inability to obtain a clear title to desirable land. In the meantime the school has been functioning in a temporary shed-like building.

SUTCLIFFE: Let's jump over to Japan. What has the Luther League done there?

DUCKER: Way back in 1931, LLA chose Japan as the locale of its fourth missionary project. The Great Depression had set in, but it had not yet caught up with the Lutheran League of America. A goal of \$15,000 was set to provide the administration buildings for our theological seminary at Tokyo. The structure was designed to provide a chapel, a library, classrooms, and facilities for administrative officers. The goal was achieved, and the quota over-subscribed. But it took four years to do it.

In due time the seminary building was completed and occupied by students and faculty. During World War II, the Japanese government used the building as a military police barracks. Officers tore out all the steam heating equipment to use in the manufacture of ammunition and other war equipment. Japanese Lutheran professors, fearing that the altar brasses from the chapel would be confiscated by the government, hid them. But they did the job so well that they have never been able to find them since.

All necessary building repairs have now been made. The seminary functions in a normal way to provide Japanese pastors for the Lutheran church there.

SUTCLIFFE: I am anxious to hear about the LLA contribution to the continent of Africa. Tell us about the Liberia project.

DUCKER: Liberia has been the ULC's most difficult field. About 30 years ago it was frankly debated on the ULC convention floor whether to abandon the work there. The debate ended with the negatives winning. But the church continues to wrestle with innumerable problems.

A few years ago it was decided that greater emphasis had to be placed on recruiting and training a larger number of national workers. To that end the entire system of native schools—all operated by the church in the hinterlands—had to be strengthened. The Foreign Missions Board turned to the Luther League for help.

At its Long Beach, Cal., convention in 1939, LLA voted to raise money for a Lutheran Training Institute. In the next two years over \$11,000 was contributed.

Difficulties on the field have delayed construction, so that the school still operates temporarily at the old Muhlenberg Boys' school, about 15 miles from the capital of the republic. The permanent location, however, has been determined as Kpolopelle. This is about 60 miles inland, or a three-day journey via footpaths. On the work of this school and the lower schools will depend the development of native leadership for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Liberia.

SUTCLIFFE: You have covered all the foreign mission fields and you have mentioned the projects completed under the Board of American Missions. Thank you, Pastor Ducker, for reviewing all the projects for us.

DUCKER: But I am not through yet, Dick. I still have more to tell. During the war years, when building operations were at a standstill, the LLA executive committee challenged leaguers with other projects.

One of these was a library endowment fund. The young people gave over \$12,000 to provide books for the two deaconess training schools.

Immediately following World War II, leaguers gave \$5,000 for work among youth in Europe. This was administered by the National Lutheran Council.

The next year, 1946, approximately \$7,500 was given for Lutheran youth work in Hungary. This, of course, was before the Kremlin forbade the help of American money to the churches of that unhappy land and before Lutheran Bishop Lajos Ordas was imprisoned on trumped up charges of collaborating with American imperialists.

Finally, Dick, there's one more fact I must

tell. Few people know that for a number of years the Luther League of America paid a substantial part of the salary of the youth worker in our church in India. This money came annually from LLA's current budget.

SUTCLIFFE: That is an impressive story you have told. I do not suppose that many of today's leaguers have known these facts.

DUCKER: To today's Luther leaguers let me say this in conclusion: By means of the numerous LLA missionary projects at home and abroad, *you are there*. The Luther League of America is there in India, Argentina, Puerto Rico, Japan, China, Konnarock, Liberia, British Guiana, and Hawaii. It's great to be a Luther leaguer and to share the fellowship of service in Christ's name.

SUTCLIFFE: Thank you, Pastor Ducker. This concludes a special broadcast (*or telecast*) of "Church World News" that has been brought to you today through the courtesy of the Luther League of

Topic suggestions

Interest would be increased through the use of a world map on which the person representing Pastor Ducker would pinpoint locations mentioned. Such a missionary map is available from either of the following:

1. Education Division, Women's Missionary Society, 1228 Spruce St., Philadelphia 7, Pa.

2. Board of Foreign Missions, Lutheran Church House, 231 Madison Ave., New York 16, N. Y.

In addition, on a blackboard should be listed all the projects. These may be found on the last page of the pamphlet "Guide for Missionary Secretaries." Your Luther League's missionary secretary certainly should have a copy. If he does not, be sure to order it from the Luther League of America. Price is 10c.

Following the telecast, leaguers may sing "Christ for the World We Sing" (CSB 218, PSH 164, CYH 278). This might be followed by an offering, a brief free prayer, and the missionary benediction ("God be merciful unto us, and bless us: And cause his face to shine upon us; That thy way may be known upon earth: Thy saving health among all nations." Psalm 67: 1,2)

The above topic would be a good one to cut out and file for future reference. Such a listing of the Luther League of America's projects over the past years will come in handy during the preparation of future topics. Here are the facts and figures you will need.

CEMENT JUNGLE

by Arthur O. F. Bauer

The city is a frontier

Work campers become pioneers

missionary sunday topic

The topic

"It's a wonderful feeling! I'm sure I served God because I actually worked to improve something of his. Usually we teen-agers don't get a chance to serve on our church council or a job where we can *really* do something for our church and God. Work camp gave me that opportunity I've been wanting—to serve God directly."

These words by one of the 1955 Luther League of America work campers were echoed in the enthusiasm of all who took part in this summer adventure of service. Each of the leaguers was confident that in work camping LLA was entering a field of tremendous possibilities.

In the summer of 1955, Luther leaguers responded to the call, "Wanted: Luther Leaguers with Dirty Hands!" More than 40 boys and girls from almost as many different points on the continent volunteered to share their time, money, and muscles in physical work. They found themselves maturing socially and

spiritually as they toiled in strange situations and as they developed Christian communities.

Jersey City, Chicago, Philadelphia! These three cities now stand as the first milestones in a new venture for youth of the United Lutheran Church.

Exposure and a talking shovel

These work camps were composed of widely different young people. A glimpse at a camp was like looking at society through the big end of a telescope. Many methods and ideas were brought into a small area. And as the days together increased, the workers were gradually integrated through physical labor and Christian love into a Christ-centered community serving others.

The laborers at a work camp volunteer to give their time, money, and energy in aiding others. In return they receive an enlightening exposure to human misery and problems. By means of study, discussion, and observation they participate with the group in overcoming these problems—problems that



Living in the city often means growing up without front lawns or place to play except in the narrow street. Luther League work campers helped fix up recreation facilities.

many of the campers found difficult to realize as being true.

Wherever the young people came into an area of need with a genuine concern for people, the language of the shovel, saw, and paint brush proved effective in reaching across barriers of race and class. This area of service needed no shuehorn to fit itself into the LLA program.

Special two-year project

In fact, delegates to the Luther League of America convention at Ann Arbor, Mich., Aug. 15-20, were so convinced that work camping is an important phase of Luther League work that they made it and caravanning special projects for the years 1955-57.

"Missions can and do belong wherever there is need," the delegates, in effect, said. They directed that a total of \$30,000 be earmarked for the two projects.

In the past the leaguers have raised such funds through special offerings. But delegates decided that this time a unified budget plan would be better. In the unified budget, in addition to the usual LLA operational budget,

they provided for work camping and caravanning. During the two-year period leaguers, they said, should be asked to give an annual apportionment of \$1.90.

Funds gathered in the "push" are to be used by the LLA to grant scholarships to interested youth who would otherwise find it impossible to share in the caravanning or work camping programs. With sufficient financial resources adequate leadership and promotion can also be arranged.

Already an expanded caravanning itinerary has been mapped out for 1956 and seven sites have been selected for work camps. (The camps are scheduled as follows: Modesto, Cal.; Albuquerque, N.M.; Lincoln, Nebr.; Toledo, Ohio; Towners, N. Y.; New Windsor, Md.; and Washington, D. C.)

Davy Crockett in the city

These work camps bring back the thrill and excitement of frontier living. For they are concerned with one of the most challenging frontiers ever to confront the United States and Canada. This new frontier is the city.

Like Jesus who "beheld the city and wept," 20th-century missionaries see an almost untouched field of service in the slums, alleys, vacant lots, and shabby houses. They see the emotionally ill and economically broken residents as being in need of an expression of God's love.

In places, the city is wild. Even city dwellers are often unaware that within a few blocks of their back fence live America's "untouchables," the socially unacceptable.

Too often the speed of life has eliminated concern for fellowmen. With no tug at his conscience a good church member can pass the drunkard in the gutter without a thought of mercy. A family can live in an apartment for years without knowing of a neighbor's illness, death, or joy.

The situation is further complicated by the fact that city dwellers are not stationary. America is on the move. In 1950 alone, 32 million people in the United States moved to a different address. During the busy years between 1940 and 1947, a total of 110 million changes of residence occurred. In the seven years that followed, 1947-1954, even more moves were counted.

In the various areas mobility rates differ. The flow from farm to city has been figured at 17 per cent, which equals the movement within large metropolitan cities. But for smaller cities and towns the percentage jumps to 30.5. Among the states there is also a wide variance. California, for example, has attracted large numbers of families, while some other states have relatively few newcomers.

The lonely and neglected

Aged people present another problem to Christians working in the city. Outliving most of their friends and neglected by what family they may have, these "social securitized" members of society are often ignored. Some of them, in their loneliness, have turned to the church and found an answer. But many, many more have not.

Last summer's Jersey City work camp helped paint the long iron fence that surrounds the Kinderfreund Home for the Aged and Children. The campers held a picnic for the senior citizens of the home.

"Serving a picnic to the old folks in the home," beamed one camper, "was a top experience of the work camp. It was just a swell feeling to see their faces light up when we sang a song that they knew. It made us happy to see them happy."

Lincoln, Nebraska's Tabitha Home will be served by a similar group of workers in 1956.

Slums present still another problem. A good share of the population movement is due to increased economic standards for certain workers. Better jobs and better wages arouse a desire for finer homes in newer neighborhoods.

As one group leaves for a new dwelling place, another group moves into the old. A formerly middle-class neighborhood becomes a poor neighborhood. Property grows older and shows its wear. Lack of financial resources leads to building neglect. Suddenly, the area is stamped "slum."

It would not be honest to say that these problems of the city are being totally ignored. Local governments are not overlooking their urban obligations. "Slum clearance and redevelopment" and "urban renewal" are key words in elaborate planning schemes. Public housing for low-income families and adequate educational facilities take much time on the agenda of city councils. Yet the problems continue to exist. Christian help is required.

An entire afternoon was spent by the Chicago work camp in visiting that city's new housing developments for Negroes. Talking with the tenants, the campers learned of the difficulty encountered by the Negroes in finding adequate and satisfactory housing.

Christian community leaders have encouraged the formation of block associations. Lawns, flowers, picket fences, and freshly painted homes now glisten in areas once regarded as slums. Christianity has been at work in improving run-down sections of the city.

A stand in the city

"A new mission field is opening before our very eyes," recently wrote the Rev. Walter Kloetzli, Jr., secretary of the National Lutheran Council's Division of American Missions, "a field which is not beyond the horizon but a field through which we have traveled daily. It is a place where many of our people are desperately seeking to know Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The church cannot—it must not—neglect its responsibility. The church must go forth to serve in this, the mission field of our inner city."

One of the most hopeful points of this city work lies with the numerous congregations that are "staying." The tremendous mobility of people has carried many congregations from the city to the suburbs, leaving large sections of the city totally untouched by witnessing from the Lutheran church. Fortunately, here and there pastors and church



This year work campers near Toledo, Ohio will help establish a day camp for children who come from city homes like this one. Leaguers will be busy all over the United States.

members have resolved not to run, but to stay and serve.

Last summer the Chicago campers visited one of these "staying" churches. Immanuel Church, located in the Woodlawn section of Chicago, is reaching out to bring in Negroes and white Christians of its neighborhood. On the frontier, it discovers and explores, invades and proclaims.

Chicago has more Lutherans than any other single United States city. Yet, in the downtown Loop area, containing 40 square miles and 816,000 people, only one National Lutheran Council congregation existed before February of last year. And this one church plans to relocate! A situation could have arisen in which nearly a million souls existed without a Lutheran witness.

Last February, Christ the King Lutheran Church was established in this densely populated area. Located on the second floor of a building at 327 South LaSalle St., office space has been converted into a worshipful sanctuary of unusual design. All appointments are of fabricated material that can be dismantled and moved to another location if necessary. The congregation holds morning and evening services every Sunday, plus two daily services which bring spiritual food to city workers on their lunch hour.

Three specific aims have been set forth by

this urban church: 1) To radiate a Christian witness to the unchurched in Chicago's Loop. 2) To serve as a rallying place for all Lutheran people, resident and transient, in the area. 3) To serve as a point from which an ecumenical witness can go forth, testifying to the university of the church.

A frontier of 800,000 people! And the church has moved in!

Many persons in large metropolitan areas, it has been discovered, cannot be reached through the usual and long—established channels of Sunday schools, worship services, organizations, and pastoral visits. Novel methods have had to be tried, calling for the daring, vision, and sturdiness which are characteristic of 20th-century style pioneers.

Inner-mission workers have paved the way with their efforts to the last century. But there are not enough of them and their field must be explored and enlarged. Skilled persons are needed for counseling, the guidance of human behavior.

Lutheran welfare societies throughout the nation have increased their staffs with family relation experts, job placement personnel, case workers, institutional chaplains, and group-work leaders. In many cities there is inter-Lutheran cooperation in this area, coordinated through the NLC's Division of Welfare.

Escape and enlargement

In large metropolitan areas, 1956 work camps will relate themselves to the Lutheran welfare service's program. In Toledo, Ohio, a camp will help to establish a day-camp for children from "Ironville"—a heavily industrial section of the city, almost overlooked among the noise and odors of oil refineries. Along with Christian instruction, the day-camp will provide a pleasant, out-of-doors escape.

Young people and children sweltering in the heat of Harlem and greater New York City will enjoy two weeks of camping at Camp Wilbur Herrlich, near Towners, N. Y., under the direction of the Lutheran Inner Mission Society of New York. Through the efforts of one of the 1956 LLA work camps, these urbanites will have their program and facilities expanded.

Spanish-speaking Americans in Albuquerque, N. M., often overlooked by the church, will be aided by another 1956 work camp. Lutherans in Albuquerque are already sharing in supporting a community center which provides a gospel-centered program of education and inspiration. Work campers will help this center to enlarge its playground and do minor repairing.

Lutheran welfare agencies are using new and different means to reach out to the communities with the gospel. Where kindness and brotherliness do not exist, they give a hand to help all in need. No concern for color or national background or economic standing hinders the service offered. Lutheran welfare workers, aided by LLA work campers, are pushing ahead with the gospel of Christ.

Information about the city

1. "An Encroaching Menace." *Life*, April, 1955. Pages 125-134.

2. "Sweet Shop Strategy." A tract prepared by the Division of American Missions, NLC, 327 S. LaSalle St., Chicago 4, Ill. Relates to the church's mission to the Jewish people.

3. *The City Story*. 40 minutes, 16mm sound film prepared by the NCCUSA. Available from the United Lutheran Publication House, 1228 Spruce St., Phila. 7, Pa. \$12.00.

4. *Dick's Discovery*. Black and white film-strip concerning the work of the city church. Rent for \$.90 or purchase for \$3.00 from ULPH.

5. *Look at the City*. By J. T. Harrington. \$1.00.

When. By L. M. Eldredge. \$.50.

They Live in the City. By M. M. Lago. \$1.25.

(These Friendship Press books are on the 1954-55 mission study program theme, "The City." They are available from the ULPH.)

6. *Mission Unlimited*. By S. F. Mack. Mission study book on the theme "The Christian Mission in a Revolutionary World." \$1.25.

7. *American Missions Together*. July, 1954. Vol. VIII, No. II. Excellent source of information about the church's new frontiers. April, 1955. Vol. IX, No. I, is also a good source. NLC, Division of American Missions.

8. *What Happened to JoJo*. 30 minutes, 16mm sound film, black and white. The story of how one church youth group did something constructive in local social action. ULPH. \$8.00.

Information about work camps

1. Work camp flyers and information from LLA, 1228 Spruce St., Phila. 7, Pa.

2. Work camp films from LLA: *This Way Out*, 16mm, B&W., sound, 15 minutes. *The More Excellent Way*, 16mm, color, sound, 25 minutes. (Fee for handling \$1.00.)

3. *In the Direction of Dreams*. By Violet Woods. Book presenting true stories of service opportunities. Chapters 2, 5, and 6 relate to LLA-type projects.

Now try this!

1. Ask a staff member from a local Lutheran welfare society to speak to your league. Request the speaker to outline the society's program and to indicate its relationship to already established congregations.

2. Visit a community center or settlement house operated by a Lutheran welfare agency (or other Protestant agency).

3. The entire league might attend a Sunday worship service in a church which is typical of the "changing area" situation. Have the two leagues meet together.

4. Invite civic leaders to present a discussion on local issues. Many communities maintain "social planning" groups.

5. Plan for someone from your league to take part in one of LLA's work camps next summer. For information, write to: WORK CAMPS, 825 Muhlenberg Building, 1228 Spruce St., Philadelphia 7, Pa.

6. Ask a former work camper and/or caravaner to speak to your league about these aspects of Luther League service.

WHO AM I?

BY PAUL L. CONRAD

How well do you know your Bible personalities?

Have fun!

The purpose of this quiz is to alert the minds of the leaguers to Biblical characters. They are encouraged to tool up their brains and see if they can come up with the correct answers from the "clues-in-rhyme."

Worship Service

HYMNS: *Common Service Book* 564, 557 and 467, or *Christian Youth Hymnal* 25, 270 and 133

SCRIPTURE: Hebrews 12

PRAYER:

O Lord Jesus Christ, who by thy apostle hast commanded us to pray for all men: In mercy regard this our people in all their many and varied walks and occupations, and enlighten all hearts with the glory of thy gospel, so that we may not live for ourselves and for those things which are passing, but obeying the law of thy life, may live for thee and for each other; who with the Father and the Holy Ghost, livest and reignest, one God, world without end. Amen.

Things to do

To follow up the printed quiz, it is suggested that the leader or various leaguers use the same characters as in the quiz, or the following Biblical personalities, and construct their own rhyme clues to see if their fellow leaguers can guess the answers: Abel, Abraham, Adam, Amos, Bath-Sheba, Boaz, Cain, Daniel, Delilah, Esau, Eve, Goliath, Jesus, Joseph, Lot, Moses, Noah, Paul, Samuel, Timothy, and Zaccheus.

Daily Bible readings

Verses for Bible reading and study could be those that are listed with the answers to this quiz. These verses could act as a springboard to other references which might further the interest of the leaguers to learn more about the people of the Bible.

Here's the quiz

- 1) I have often been called the Bible Hercules.
I killed many Philistines who were my enemies.
I was lured by Delilah's beauty
Thus, disobeyed God and shirked my duty!

WHO AM I?

- 2) I moved by night like a frightened bird.
Talking with Jesus, I could be heard.
Close to the Kingdom, I did come,
However, to cowardice did succumb!

WHO AM I?

- 3) The hiss of a snake is in my name.
Disillusionment and errors won me fame.
I thought that I my Lord would betray,
But instead I sold my life away!

WHO AM I?

- 4) I was a many-sided Biblical character.
Warrior, poet, musician, administrator.

• Paul L. Conrad is in his senior year at Southern Seminary, Columbia, S. C.

My career knew sin, knew fault
and cruelty,
Thus, personified my nation's destiny!

WHO AM I?

- 5) I lifted my kingdom—to a greater fall.
I had gods, wives, palaces, fortresses, and all.
Three thousand proverbs I did write,
Yet died without honor despite my might!

WHO AM I?

- 6) I was the worst woman ever, yet a queen.
I had a vineyard owner killed with stones.
I was thrown from the window by eunuchs mean,
And the dogs did come and eat my bones!

WHO AM I?

- 7) I was a king whose name contained fourteen letters.
On Egypt, Judah, and Syria, I hung great fetters.
Of my character, Daniel painted the black side.
For I cursed, killed, built, oppressed and lied!

WHO AM I?

- 8) God and Satan fought for my soul.
Satan took my family and health for his goal.
God was triumphant in the end,
And to me did prosperity and happiness send!

WHO AM I?

- 9) I was a total stranger in the land.
The Passover, I had come to keep.
But when the Lord fell with his cross,
To his assistance, I did leap!
- WHO AM I?
- 10) I was a coward, some folk say.
I wore a civil official's gown.
When faced with the choice of justice or job,
At the end I meekly did back

down.

WHO AM I?

- 11) I enjoyed preaching the gospel.
Saw heaven at my last breath.
I am known as the first Christian martyr.
My enemies stoned me to death!

WHO AM I?

- 12) I was a seller of purple
In the city of Philippi;
After conversion by Paul and Silas,
Home missions I gave a try!

WHO AM I?

- 13) I was once a slave and a servant.
Philemon asked my recall.
I became his son and brother,
When found by the Apostle Paul.

WHO AM I?

- 14) In the fiery furnace, I did go
With my friends Meshach and Abed-nego.
Along with them, I survived the flame,
Thus, baffling the king—Nebuchadnezzar, by name!

WHO AM I?

- 15) I was a beggar at a rich man's gate.
The life I lived, I'll not relate.
Later did in "Abraham's bosom" rest,
And, instead of a beggar, was now a guest!

WHO AM I?

Answers to quiz

- 1) Samson (Judges 13:24)
- 2) Nicodemus (John 7:50)
- 3) Judas Iscariot (Matthew 10:4)
- 4) David (1 Samuel 18:1)
- 5) Solomon (1 Kings 4:32)
- 6) Jezebel (1 Kings 18:19)
- 7) Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 2:1)
- 8) Job (Job 1:1)
- 9) Simon of Cyrene (Mark 15:21)
- 10) Pilate (Matthew 27:24)
- 11) Stephen (Acts 6:5)
- 12) Lydia (Acts 16:14)
- 13) Onesimus (Philemon 10)
- 14) Shadrach (Daniel 3:13)
- 15) Lazarus, the beggar (Luke 16:20)

The PARABLES of Jesus

by Philip A. R. Anttila

Three sessions aimed at helping you understand what Jesus meant when he spoke in parables

To the adviser

This is the first of three sessions concerning the parables of Jesus. Session one discusses why Jesus used parables in teaching religious concepts, defines the word "parable," and presents the meanings of several. Provision is then made for your group to begin work on dramas translating the Biblical parables to the intermediate's experience. In session two the leaguers continue writing and rehearsing their skits. In session three the modernized parables are performed by the leaguers for the congregation, if desired.

Material provided here is flexible. Consequently, if your leaguers assume the initiative in program planning, use the suggestions as springboards. If, on the other hand, your group follows the printed topics quite closely, you will find in the material a wealth of guidance.

Since the three topics of the unit are correlated, decide whether it will be better for one planning-committee to direct all three sessions, overseeing production details, or whether you wish several youth to plan just the first session, letting each small group be responsible for its own production.

You, of course, will want to keep your fingers on the pulse of all details—furnishing guidance and keeping the development of this unit moving. You may need additional adults to work with you during the three sessions,

particularly if yours is a large intermediate group.

Suggestions for producing the dramas are given in the second session.

The following ideas might guide you in setting up the group workshop called for in session one:

- 1) After the skit and/or discussion on the parables, explain the plan for the next two sessions. Then divide the group into several units of five or six members. Keep the groups as equal as possible in number and talent. Do not permit all youth of exceptional ability to be in one group. Appoint a leader for each group.

- 2) Have each group read the suggested parables, adding others if you like. Each unit should choose a different parable as its particular project.

- 3) Let each group hold a buzz session to exchange ideas as to how the parables can be developed in terms of present-day experiences. Be ready to offer an example to stimulate the leaguers' imaginations, if needed. Some of the groups might wish to meet before the next session to develop their ideas further.

• The Rev. Philip A. R. Anttila is pastor of Trinity Church, Fairport Harbor, Ohio.

Set the stage, leader

You're going to ring up the curtain on the first of three programs concerning the parables of Jesus. So it's important that this program be lively and thoroughly planned.

In this session you will answer three questions for your league: What is a parable? Why did Jesus use parables? What are some purposes of the parables?

Answers for these questions are given in a radio-type broadcast. If, however, your group dotes on discussion and has more fun finding their own answers to questions, then skip the broadcast and schedule the meeting-time for discussion. Directions and questions for a question-bee are given after the play.

Following presentation of the play and/or the discussion, your league will become a "workshop." The league will be divided into small units of five or six members each. It's the job of each unit to select one of Jesus' parables and plan a skit that tells how the parable might be done if he were telling it today.

If you need a committee to assist you in putting on a bang-up program, select leaguers with lots of ideas. Your session has got to be good—two additional programs hinge on it.

Radio broadcast

You may produce this as a play with all parts memorized—or as a radio program originating in a studio. In the latter case, each character may use the script. Sound effects, like forks clattering on plates, will make the drama seem more real.

Of course, if you really want to simulate a broadcast—and hear how you sound—record the play on a tape or wire recording. Play it back the night of your league meeting.

The cast: Mr. Martin, Mrs. Martin, Ruth, Mark, and an announcer.

ANNOUNCER: Our roving reporter today is going to take you to the home of the Martins. It's dinnertime on Sunday. The Martin's are just beginning their meal. The scene opens with Mr. Martin asking the blessing. Mrs. Martin and their children Ruth, 12, and Mark, 14, are seated at the table.

MR. MARTIN: Dear heavenly Father, we thank thee for these gifts of life and for that Word of Life with which we have been fed this day. Amen.

MRS. MARTIN: You know, I just love Sunday. No washing, no ironing, no cleaning. Just relaxing. Ruth, do you care for potatoes?

RUTH: Ummmmm, mashed potatoes? Okay.

MR. MARTIN: I like Sunday, too. Guess it's because going to Sunday school and church get us started right for the whole week.

MRS. MARTIN: Here's your plate, Ruth. You know, a lot of people say they can't go to church because their Sunday dinner is so late. I'll bet we have our dinner as early as any family in town—and still go to church.

MARK: Lots of potatoes, please, Mother. Whaddya mean, just as early? I'll bet we're earlier. Why I just saw Mr. Miller next door come out on his porch to get the Sunday paper. In his pajamas, too. Look, it's noon—and they're just getting up. Must've had a party last night.

RUTH: Mind your own business, Mark. It's none of your business what the Millers do. Bread, please, Daddy.

MR. MARTIN: Certainly. Maybe it is Mark's business, Ruth. You shouldn't be nosy, or pry into other people's business. But the Millers don't go to church at all, you know. And that is our business.

MRS. MARTIN: They're such fine people, too. You remember, Dad, they used to be so active in church. I wonder why they've stopped.

MARK: Maybe they're like the lost sheep—you know the lost sheep in the sermon this morning.

MR. MARTIN: Maybe. But that's not all of the story. Remember the shepherd? He cared more about the lost sheep than all of those in the fold.

RUTH: Fold. What's a fold?

MRS. MARTIN: It's sort of a pen, Ruth.

MARK: Yeah, silly. That's where they keep the sheep.

RUTH: I'm not silly, am I, Mother? I just can't figure out what some of those old words are. Why does Pastor Edwards have to use them?

MR. MARTIN: Well, Ruth, he's using them in a parable. That's a story Jesus



The parable of the sower.

told. Only it's not a real story—even in Jesus' day it wasn't a real story. When Jesus wanted to tell people spiritual ideas in a simple way he told a parable. Some of the things he had to talk about were hard to understand.

MRS. MARTIN: That's right. He compared his ideas to something familiar, and he told them in a story.

MARK: Yeah. Isn't there a story about the good Samaritan?

MRS. MARTIN: And there's a parable about the kingdom of heaven being like yeast.

MR. MARTIN: And how about the parable of the tares—those are weeds, Ruth.

RUTH: Well—I like the stories Jesus told. But I feel ashamed when I can't explain them.

MARK: You're just a girl. Whaddya expect? Please pass the butter, Mother.

MRS. MARTIN: Now, Mark, that wasn't nice. You don't know everything about the parables. Neither do I.

RUTH: Why didn't Jesus tell the facts, Daddy? Why'd he have to use sheep and shepherds? How many kids know what a shepherd does. Or about sheep?

Why some kids in our school have never seen a sheep. Except in a zoo, maybe.

MARK: Yeah. And how about mustard seeds. What's so wonderful about mustard seeds?

MR. MARTIN: Those things are odd to us. But Jesus had to tell about objects that his people would understand. He was talking to people in his day. He wouldn't have talked about a peach tree, or tomatoes then. Nobody would have known what he was talking about.

MRS. MARTIN: Yes and Jesus' teaching was completely new to people then. Completely different from anything they had ever heard before. So he used stories—parables—so that his teaching would be easy to remember. You know yourself that you can remember a story better than a lot of facts.

MR. MARTIN: And parables don't pick on any one person. You can tell them without hurting anyone directly.

MARK: What do you mean by that, Dad?

MR. MARTIN: Look at it this way. Just a little while ago you said that Mr. Miller was like a lost sheep. Now you

wouldn't go up to him and say, "Mr. Miller, you're a lost sheep." He wouldn't understand what you were talking about. And if he did, he'd get mad. But if you'd tell the story to a group of people, and Mr. Miller was in the audience, he might get the point. He might think that he's like a lost sheep.

RUTH: More milk, please, Mark. That's silly, Daddy. How would Mr. Miller know you were talking about him? Sometimes people don't know. I don't think I'd ever call myself a lost sheep. Not even if you told me directly that I was.

MARK: You're not a lost sheep. You're a dead duck.

MR. MARTIN: That's enough Mark. It's like this, Ruth. If people have a spiritual background and training in the church, they can understand the parables. Those who don't will not know what the parables are talking about. The Millers aren't heathen; they used to go to church. If they heard the story of the lost sheep they might put themselves in the place of the lost sheep. The parable would make them think.

MRS. MARTIN: You know, if you put the parables in modern experience and terms we use today, people would still know the idea Jesus was trying to get across.

MR. MARTIN: As I understand it, the parables show four things.

RUTH: What are they, Dad?

MR. MARTIN: Well, first, a parable shows how the Kingdom of God is received.

MARK: Like the farmer putting in seeds?

MR. MARTIN: That's exactly right. He tossed some in stony ground, in hard earth, some went in thorn and weedy land, and some fell in good rich dirt. The next thing a parable points up is how the kingdom grows.

RUTH: Is that like the one about the mustard seed? It starts small and grows big?

MRS. MARTIN: That's it, Ruth.

MR. MARTIN: Then a parable can tell you what the kingdom is like. For instance, take the story of the priceless

pearl. A man would give everything for the kingdom when he discovers its value.

MRS. MARTIN: I remember that one.

MR. MARTIN: Then you can learn what the future of the Kingdom of Heaven will be like.

MRS. MARTIN: Would that be the parable about the yeast affecting the whole world?

MARK: Sounds about right, Mother.

RUTH: Wouldn't it be swell, Mark, to have a topic on parables at league?

MARK: Yeah. It'd be fun to take a couple of parables and work them out in modern terms. I'd take the one about the good Samaritan—write it up like it was a robbery on Main Street at night. Boy, I'd be the robber.

RUTH: You would (*scornfully*). Well, if we worked on the parables long enough, why couldn't we give a program for our parents?

MARK: That's neat, Sis. Let's ask Joe and Mr. Williams if we could do it.

MRS. MARTIN: That's wonderful. I hope it works out.

Developing the idea

Line up a blackboard for this session.

The following questions are suggested for a discussion period. These questions will guide you. You will probably want to develop several questions under each of these main questions to bring out points that will create better understanding of the subject.

1) What is a parable? *A story of illustration that is true to life, pointing to a higher truth.*

2) Why did Jesus use parables? *If your group gets stumped read Matthew 13:10-16. Here Jesus himself answered the question.*

4) What are some purposes of parables? *To illustrate spiritual truth; to make it easy for people to remember the point; to avoid direct offense; to hide truth from those who lack the quality of spirit to receive it; and to tell a truth in a simple story that people can retell to others.*

5) Did Jesus originate the parables? *No. They were used by the best teachers, even in the Old Testament.*

6) How many parables did Jesus use? 44. On the blackboard write the words "The Kingdom of Heaven Is Like." Then make two columns. Head one "Jesus' Comparison" and the other "Meaning." Let the group read

the following parables to uncover the object which Jesus compared the kingdom and what he meant in using the comparison.

Matthew 13:1-9; 31-33; 45; 47-50.

The columns might read like this on the first Bible reference (Matthew 13:1-9): *Seeds sown on good ground—how people hear God's word.*

Note that these parables tell about the kingdom: How it is received, how it grows, what it is like, and the kingdom's future.

Parables to dramatize

You will probably pick out additional parables to act out, in addition to these four:

"Wise and Foolish Builders," Matthew 24 and Luke 6:47; "The Lost Boy," Luke 15:11-32; "The Talents," Matthew 25:14-30; and "The Good Samaritan," Luke 10:30-35.

For worship

HYMN: "O Word of God Incarnate" 117
Parish School Hymnal

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 13:10-16

PRAYER: No. 37, page 29, *PSH*

PRESENTATION of play and/or discussion

OFFERING HYMN: "Thy Word Is Like a Garden, Lord" No. 123 *PSH*

CLOSING PRAYER: No. 23, page 27, *PSH*

WORD'S PRAYER

BENEDICTION

SECOND SESSION

Work session

In this session the adviser will guide the writing of the parables. You should be familiar enough with each parable being used so that you can give direction when it is needed.

Let the groups develop adaptations of the parables on their own. Encourage originality in interpretation. You may suggest idea starters, if needed.

Keep the groups at work. Unruly and noisy groups develop only if they are not active. Impress on the group leader the importance of group participation. Often the burden of developing an idea falls upon a few.

Be sure to encourage real thought and meaningful development. Some groups may hurriedly put some adaptation together and then waste time.

Producing the parables

The following section suggests methods by which the parables might be developed. Use the ingenuity of your group, however, in

writing and producing scripts.

Elaborate staging is unnecessary. Costuming can be simple—and settings crude, using whatever facilities that exist in your church. If no stage or platform is available, mark off a stage area in one end of the room, using screens to hide the entrances and exits of the actors.

If you need a background scene for the parable of the farmer sowing seed, secure a slide depicting a rural countryside. Suspend a sheet from the ceiling. Behind the sheet set up your slide projector at an angle so that the scene is projected into a mirror. Then focus the mirror on the sheet. The scene will show through the sheet. Your actors perform in front of the sheet, their actions being silhouetted.

Wise and foolish buildings

Mold a brick of damp sand about the size of a building brick. Place a regulation building brick beside the sand brick. Atop both bricks place a miniature figure. Pour water over both bricks. The one of sand will dissolve, and the figure will tumble.

Let the audience guess which parable was demonstrated. When they have determined the parable, let a leaguer read the original from the Bible.

Then develop a "split" stage. The reader explains the modern version as two persons play the parts.

This production might portray private devotions, prayer, church attendance, and participation in the work of the church as the elements that develop a sturdy house (person). You might also emphasize types of friends, literature; courtesies, behavior, and entertainment.

Contrast these positive aspects with disregard for worship, undesirable friends, and literature.

Then point out that when difficulties arise (lack of money, illness, other hardships) the one person has nothing to cling to for support. So he might seek escape in drinking. The well-rooted person, however, meets difficulties knowing that his strength is in God's promise. (See Luke 12:28; 31; John 6:47; John 8:12; Matthew 28:20.)

Conclude by referring to the object lesson and by pointing out how everyone meets difficulties in life. These difficulties can strengthen or break a life. Christ challenges us to build on the Word of Life.

Another method might be to have the narrator read the script while personalities on stage pantomime the action. Other persons

may be used as good and bad companions of the main characters.

The lost boy

Production of this can be patterned after the television program "This Is Your Life." Here one person stands (representing Ralph Edwards) in a mock television framework. Follow the television program as much as possible.

Program can then develop the story of a boy led away from God, and how he finally decides to accept the forgiveness and love of his parents.

Or write the story of a girl in junior high school who consistently disregards her parents, plays hokey in school, and loses her baby-sitting job because she takes five dollars from her employers. Then, paralleling the story to the Bible, depict her apprehension for stealing. Out of this experience she decides to start better relationships with her parents and her school.

The talents

Depict a scene in which a girl—a talented musician—decides not to play the organ in her church, after she has been offered the opportunity. Go into reasons why she would refuse. Then show a fellow—another talented musician—who accepts the job and broadens his musicianship.

Another version would be a junior high student, refusing to try out for the dramatics club because he feels that he has no talent. Weave into this drama the story of another student, who thinks he has no ability, and the experiences he gains as a member of the group—even though he has only mediocre acting ability.

Or tell about Mary Ann, who declines the job of program chairman of her intermediate league; of Eddie, who assumes responsibility for the league's evangelism program and of Carl who is elected president. Weave in events that happen to each, how the experiences help to mold their personalities.

Another adaptation of the parable might be the tale of three boys who earn money. One spends his on candy and the movies; another saves his for college; and a third invests his in photography equipment. The emphasis here would be not the money, but how the teenagers use it to broaden their talents.

The good samaritan

Endless varieties of drama could be the vehicle for telling the message of this parable. Here are a few:

A Negro on his way to work is attacked by

a gang of hoodlums. Three passersby see him. One runs away in fear; another curses all "niggers" and drives off; the third takes the man to the hospital.

A junior high boy on his way to the movies gets waylaid by fellows from another part of the city.

The point of the parable does not need to be drawn by physical violence. For instance, Joan, who has just moved to town, is snubbed by the girls in her seventh-grade class. Depict the reactions of three groups of students to this social "freeze-out." One group could condemn her for the way she dresses, how she talks, etc. Another clique could be unfriendly because she is not a member of their church. While a third group seeing the unfair treatment becomes friendly with the girl and helps her to become adjusted to the school.

For the group leaders

Keep the productions on a high level. Some of the productions will probably be funny. As long as the message is not lost by the humorous situation, do not squelch hilarious bits.

Strive for top notch performance. If your adviser agrees, meet during the week with your group to develop ideas and to learn the parts.

Much will depend upon your thoroughness. Have enough scripts. Use everyone in your group and have good props.

Do not stick too closely to the suggestions. Use the imagination and the cleverness of your group. The suggestions only serve to get you started.

Consult with your adviser or pastor for accurateness.

Suggestions for the adviser

Invite the parents of all leaguers to production night. Publicize by postal cards, the weekly church bulletin, parish paper, or public announcements several weeks in advance. Make it a family night. Light refreshments could be served, and the offering could be designated for some special cause.

Allow the groups about one hour in work sessions. If more time is needed, arrange a mid-week meeting at the church or in a home.

Perhaps your league is not large enough to produce all the parables. If you are limited, then work on one parable as a league.

Encourage the groups in their efforts.

Helps for worship

HYMN: "How Firm a Foundation" 216 *Parish School Hymnal*

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 13:1-23



The Good Samaritan

PRAYER:

O Lord Jesus, who by the Word doth nourish us with thy grace and doth teach us of thy will, we pray for the Holy Spirit. May thy spirit of truth lead us into a fuller understanding of thy Word. Give us grace to keep thy holy will and to apply its teachings in our daily living. Let us grow in the realization that thy Word is truth and that thy Word is Christ in whose name we pray. Amen.

WORKSHOP GROUPS

OFFERING HYMN: "Thy Word Is Like a Garden, Lord" 123 *PSH*

PRAYER: No. 23, page 27, *PSH*

LORD'S PRAYER

BENEDICTION

THIRD SESSION

Here's how

Leaguers should be in charge of production night. If your congregation is present, explain the work and purpose of your last two sessions. Emphasize that the leaguers have written and produced the skits.

Arrange to produce the parable with the most complicated props first. Duplicate scenery where possible so that long delays will not occur between skits.

Keep the longest presentation until last. You might precede it with the hymn "Lord, Thy Word Abideth," (119 *PSH*). At this time also the offering might be received.

After all the productions have been presented, the pastor, or a church councilman might comment upon the youth program in the congregation, and commend the leaguers for their presentations.

Suggested worship

HYMN: "Spread, O Spread, Thou Mighty Word" 120 *Parish School Hymnal*

SCRIPTURE: Matthew 13:10-17

PRAYER: By a leaguer

PRODUCTION OF PARABLES

HYMN: "Lord Keep Us Steadfast in Thy Word" 121 *PSH*

PRAYER: By the adviser or pastor

LORD'S PRAYER

BENEDICTION

THESE THINGS NEED DOING

Faith without works
is dead

By Lawrence T. Rugh

Notes to leader

The material for this topic is written to be presented as it is. Of course, local circumstances may necessitate some adaptations, but the general plan of activity during the presentation should be followed.

If possible, blackboard, chalk, and eraser should be ready for use. Each leaguer should have a Bible in hand, unless the suggested references are assigned to individuals.

The same references can be used by the leaguers for daily Bible reading and meditation.

Here's why

1. To help leaguers see things-that-need-doing.
2. To help leaguers see that they, as followers of Christ, should want to do them.
3. To help them do them.

Worship ideas

CALL TO WORSHIP: Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the lands! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing!

HYMN: "The Son of God Goes Forth to War" CYH 219

SCRIPTURE: Luke 10:25-37

PRAYER: O heavenly Father, who didst send thy Son, Jesus Christ, to serve mankind and to give his life for the salvation of all, open our eyes and hearts that we may see and serve in his name and for his sake. Amen.

HYMN: "O Master, Let Me Walk with Thee" CYH 195

TOPIC

HYMN: "Teach Me, My God and King"
CYH 217

(Other suitable hymns: "We Would be Building", "Go, Labor On", "Now in the Days of Youth", "Take My Life", "Lord, I Speak to Me").

The topic

"Somebody has to do it," was the answer one man gave when asked why he was busy cleaning up a mess.

When you see something that should be done, do you dig in and get to work, or do you say, "Why doesn't someone do something about this?" or "Let George . . . or the government . . . or the janitor . . . or the pastor . . . do it?"

Wherever you are, wherever you go, there are things that need to be done.

For instance, just look around you. Make a list of the things that could and should be done to your meeting room.

(Let leaguers suggest. Write list on blackboard. Could be anything from picking up hymnbooks to painting.)

Who, me?

See what I mean? There are always things that need doing.

Who should do them?

Before we start to pass the buck (or the job), let's open our Bibles and look up a few references:

(The following may be assigned to different individuals, or called out in contest fashion, the first one locating the reference reading it.) Matthew 10:39, 42; 20:25-28; Luke 9:23-24; 10:25-37; 14:27; 22:24-27; John 13:15; Galatians 5:13; Colossians 3:23-24; James 1:22-27; 1 Peter 2:21; 4:10-11.

Send me!

You've heard all these before, many times. Let us sum them up by saying that a Christian, a follower of Jesus Christ, does the things that need doing, because he is a Christian. This was the example Jesus left. From changing water to wine for a wedding to washing the hot, dusty feet of his disciples before his last supper with them, he served, he did what needed to be done.

We must do the same.

So, if there are things that need doing, let's do them!

(Now go down the list the leaguers have suggested and choose at least one item that they could do now without taking too much time. Then let them do it, and reassemble as soon as finished.)

Evaluate

We have seen something that needed doing, and we've done it. Now let's evaluate it, a big word that means, "What good was it?"

These questions may guide your thoughts and discussion:

1. Was it worth the time and energy used?
2. Did it help someone else?
3. How do you feel, inside, for having helped? (How do you feel, inside, if you only stood around and watched the others?)

A name

There is a name for this sort of *things-that-need-doing*. We call them service projects. There are lists that will tell you what others have done, (see "131 Serv-

ice Projects", LLA headquarters) but the important part is for you to—

● Learn to see *these things-that-need-doing* around you every day.

● Realize that as a Christian, you are called by God to do something about them.

● Do them.

● When it's all over you should feel—

● That it was worth it.

● That others have been helped.

● That you have grown a little as a Christian because you did something, for Jesus' sake.

The windup

To wind this up (like a clock—because this should only be the beginning), let's make a new list of *things-that-need-doing* in your church or community, or even beyond—things that you, as leaguers, could do.

(Perhaps some of the original list will help to start this off. Leader may have some ideas, but greatest value will be gained if the leaguers themselves see and suggest needed projects.)

Pick one

Now let's pick one or two and get to work on them, setting up committees, planning the dates, who will provide what, etc.

But before you go any farther, and through it all, let us pray:

"O use me, Lord, use even me,
Just as Thou wilt, and when, and where."
Amen.

● The Rev. Lawrence T. Rugh, London, Ohio, is a member-at-large of the Luther League of America executive committee.

● Unless Congressional economizers desist in their practice of cutting down funds available for the operation of our courts we might just as well close our doors and turn everybody loose. I noticed the other day that Congress provided more money for the care of monkeys in the Washington Zoo than it has for the juvenile department of the Federal courts.—*Sherrill Halbert*.

GOD FORGIVES

It costs God something to forgive you

Nor is accepting forgiveness easy

by R. Russell Riethmiller

How do you find forgiveness? How do you know you're forgiven? This program will answer these questions?

Lowdown for the leader

Assemble these props for the meeting: A copy of the self-rating chart, printed at the end of the topic, for every leaguer; three dunce caps; two cardboard question marks about 15 inches high; and a blackboard.

The entire program hinges on group discussion. So line up the best discussion leader in your league unit, or among older teen-agers in the church, to be the master of ceremonies.

If your league discussions swarm with comments, heated arguments, and the smoke of overheated brains, forget about the dunce caps and the question marks. These props are to help the less talkative leagues get started on discussion.

Some groups, however, might find that the following technique will stimulate discussion.

Divide your league into groups of three. Let the first group of "Whiz Kids" don the dunce caps. Then have the discussion leader fire the first question at them. Any one of the three can answer, or venture an opinion, or comment. If a leaguer in the audience disagrees, or wants to add something, he picks up one of the giant question marks and holds it high. The discussion leader then calls upon him. Be sure, however, that the three "Whiz Kids" wearing the dunce caps, get the chance to say all that they wish to on the subject.

When the group has arrived at the answer to the question, change "Whiz Kids" and ask the second trio the second question. Keep rotating the "Whiz Kids" with each question.

Some questions in the topic seem to have one-word answers. When a leaguer comes up with a one-word answer, ask "why," or "how," to get at the root of his reasoning.

Perhaps you would like to follow this program outline:

Self-rating quiz to introduce the program.

Story and comments given in the section "God Is a Forgiving Father." Tell the story in your own words.

Discussion. You might write the questions on the blackboard at the beginning of the discussion.

God Is a Forgiving Father

"I've done so many things wrong," Jack blurted out to his pastor after league meeting. "I lie to my Dad about where I've been so I won't get in trouble. I don't like to work on homework. And I copy from the other kids."

Perhaps some young people are not concerned about wrong doings. But to Jack they were a source of real distress.

• The Rev. R. Russell Riethmiller is pastor of Faith Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.



The price of forgiveness runs high

He was even more concerned because his sense of grief and sin was not as great as he thought it ought to be. Furthermore, in spite of his best resolutions, he would still knowingly yield to temptation.

Maybe you feel like Jack. If so, perhaps we can find the answers Jack found to the problem of forgiveness.

(After the introduction is given use the self-rating chart. Then the following series of questions for discussion could be asked. Perhaps the questions could be written on the blackboard in advance. Allowing time for discussion, the leader could conclude with the resource material given after each question.)

How do we know God?

Jesus said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father." God has revealed himself in many ways, but chiefly in Jesus. It is through Jesus that we know God as our Father. The word "God" is difficult to explain, but the word "Father" is understood by even a child. How do we know God? We know him as we know Jesus.

Does God know us?

God is our Father, and we are his children. God wanted a family and not a string of puppets nor a horde of robots. As Creator, therefore, he made persons, "in his own image," so that he could have fellowship.

They would be strange parents indeed who simply number their children without giving them individual names. How true about God and us. God knows us by name. Just as he knew Israel, he says to us also, "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine." (Isaiah 43: 1).

Jesus wanted us to realize how completely God is person-minded so he used exaggeration to impress this truth upon us—"Even the hairs of your head are numbered." (Luke 12: 7). God certainly knows his children.

Is God to be feared or loved?

If you commit a crime, the sight of the policeman is a terror. He has authority and power to arrest. How then can we sinners live so close to God who has all power and authority and not be constantly terrified? We can because he is our Father. He is understanding, forgiving. He loves us.

Like our earthly father, however, God requires respect, obedience, right living. God is not a terror to us, yet he is to be feared when we are rebellious or disobedient. As our Father, he gives us strength. He will also be merciful when we repent over our rebelliousness.

How can we realize the love of God?

Forgiveness is not a matter of sin made unreal, but of real sin forgiven. Take a piece of paper and write down the sins of which you feel guilty. Don't make them up. Put down the ones you really feel. See how much God has forgiven you. Specific sins, as well as our sinfulness, God forgives. Forgiveness makes us appreciate the love of God. The more we are forgiven, the more we realize God's love, and the more we must love him, too.

How often do we need to be forgiven?

Our bodies require food for life, and from the food we derive the essential vitamins for healthy bodies. Our souls require the bread of life, and one of the essential vitamins to the life of the soul is forgiveness. We cannot store a surplus of vitamins in the body. A daily "in-take" is necessary. We need to be forgiven again and again—daily, in fact.

What is necessary for forgiveness?

There are always attempts to find easier ways out of our failure to be true to God. Such devices as penance, self-torment, pilgrimages, good deeds, are futile. It does no good to shed rivers of tears if confession and repentance are absent. Genuine repentance is necessary before forgiveness can be assured.

We dare not ask God to deal with our sins any differently than we are willing to deal with the sins of others against us. We are often relentless and unwilling to forgive. In the end it does more harm to us than to those against whom we hold grievances. It makes people sick to be unforgiving.

Forgiveness is not easy even for God. It cost God something. "He gave his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth might not perish." The agony of the cross was endured for our forgiveness.

How do we know we're forgiven?

We believe God and trust his promise. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1: 9)

What part has the church in God's forgiveness?

In the explanation to the third article of the Creed, the *Catechism* reads, "... In which

Christian church he daily forgives abundantly all my sins." We become a part of the church—the body of Christ—by our baptism. Thereafter the daily benefit of our baptism is channeled to us through the church.

Our life in Christ is bound up with the church. Belonging to Christ means we are part of his church. In public worship we confess our sins and receive the assurance of pardon. But even in private devotions we are still essentially part of the church.

Self-rating chart

1. Do you take time to talk and listen to God in prayer and meditation? YES—No
 2. Do you think of God's presence only in church? YES—No
 3. Does God see everything that you do? YES—No
 4. As you afraid in the dark? YES—No
 5. When you forgive someone, do you also forget it? Are you willing to forgive and forget? YES—No
 6. Do you believe that your "daily bread" is provided by God? YES—No
 7. Do you think that God is ever angry with you? YES—No
 8. Do you willingly attend worship? YES—No
- KEY: 1—Yes; 2—No; 3—Yes; 4—No; 5—Yes; 6—Yes; 7—Yes; 8—Yes.

Word study

Fellowship—mutual relation between God and man, as in worship and prayer.

Justification—made acceptable to God.

Absolution—assurance of God's forgiveness.

Penitence—showing sorrow for sins.

Repentance—confession of sins.

Worship outline

HYMN: 200 CYH; 211 PSH

THEME: Forgiveness is a daily experience. We have this blessing because God is our Father, and we are his children. Let us be aware of God's nearness and appreciative of his love.

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 51 or Matthew 18: 21-35

PRAYER:

O God, giver of every good and perfect gift, shed the cheering light of thy grace in our hearts. Surround us with thy presence both when we sleep and when we wake. Be our daily companion. Our faults, our failings, as well as our necessities, are all known unto thee. Pardon our sins, and by thy guidance preserve us from making shipwreck of faith; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

HYMN: 214 CYH; 218 PSH

TOPIC

HYMN: 130 CYH; 317 PSH

OFFERING

LORD'S PRAYER

Good AND EVIL

If God created everything
how can anything be bad?

by Arthur Yeagy

Aside to the leader

Good and evil are two words that usually lead into a lively, perhaps controversial, discussion. This topic is designed to examine some of the common and mistaken ideas about good and evil and to show the correct relationship of God to the evil around us.

The topic is planned so as to use six members, including the leader. You can reduce or increase the number of participants according to your attendance. Change the names to those of the participants. In order to make the lines sound real and alive, study your parts before meeting night. You don't have to memorize, but try to avoid word-for-word reading. Don't be afraid to let loose with your dramatic ability.

Your program can begin with the topic itself. Because the topic has a worship service included within it, it will not be necessary to have a separate devotional program.

If you want a smooth operation, don't permit open discussion until your prepared program has been completed. A discussion period might follow the last hymn.

Following the topic you will find a brief quiz. The group as a whole can answer these questions as you read them, or you can ask each leaguer to decide the answers for himself. For the latter idea, if there are not enough copies of *High Ideals*, prepare in advance mimeographed copies.

The hymns suggested are all to be found in the *Christian Youth Hymnal*. If your league does not have this book, select similar hymns from the *Parish School Hymnal* or the *Common Service Book*.

Whoever reads the scripture passages should study the sections before the meeting.

Worship materials used in topic

HYMNS:

"This is My Father's World," 180 CYH

"Who Is on the Lord's Side?" 228 CYH

"My Soul, Be On Thy Guard," 223 CYH

"O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go,"
202 CYH

SCRIPTURE: Genesis 1-3; John 1:1-5; Psalm
139:1-12; II Corinthians 12:7-10.

PRAYER: Numbers 55 and 58 in CYH

Topic

LEADER: The other evening Bill and I had a discussion which we think might interest all of you. We got pretty involved with the problem of evil and tried to find some Christian answers to our questions.

- The Rev. Arthur Yeagy is assistant to the president of the Central Pennsylvania Synod. His headquarters are in Harrisburg, Pa.

Bill is going to present four of the big questions. Let's see if we can answer them. Bill, will you give us the first one?

BILL: Is there really such a thing as evil? After all, God made everything and God is good. How can anything be bad?

LEADER: That is a good one with which to begin. Nancy, you have a Bible there. Will you read Genesis 1:1-5?

(Nancy reads the Genesis passage)

That does make it clear that God created everything, doesn't it. Now let's all take our Bibles, and glance through the balance of Genesis 2, also. It is a thrilling story, ending with the account of God's greatest creation, man!

But what do you see when you look into Genesis 3?

SHIRLEY: Why, God's creatures chose to do the very thing God had asked them not to do!

LEADER: You're right. God gave man the power to choose. There was an evil force in the world that was against God, trying to turn his creatures away from him. And God gave men the freedom to choose which way their lives should go.

JIM: The whole Bible story really grows out of that, doesn't it? God keeps calling men to the way of goodness. And men keep turning away and hurting themselves and others. Doesn't God try to help them?

LEADER: Oh yes, he does so in many ways. He gave them the Ten Commandments. And later, most wonderful of all, he gave them his Son, that they should really see his goodness and be able to return to him.

RUTH: That makes me think of one of our hymns, "This Is My Father's World."

LEADER: Let's turn to that hymn in our *Christian Youth Hymnal*. It is number 180. *(All turn to hymn)*. Notice all three stanzas, especially stanza 3. God made everything. But wrong is "oft so strong." Notice who overcomes—not the power of evil, but God reigns.

(All sing hymn)

BILL: Here is another way of putting the problem: Perhaps God is stronger

than the power of evil. But a lot of people don't seem to know it, or act like it. So often evil men seem to win out. If they do, then why should the rest of us bother with being good?

LEADER: Yes, it does sometimes seem that evil men can ignore God, and get away with it. The Apostle John thought about that. He thought about Jesus, too. Then he saw the truth, that it really doesn't turn out that way in the end.

Nancy, will you open your New Testament now and read the first five verses of the Gospel according to St. John?

(Nancy reads John 1:1-5)

LEADER: Evil men seemed to win out over Jesus. After all, they sent him to the cross. But did they win, really?

SHIRLEY: No, they didn't. He rose again. The power of evil has not overcome him.

JIM: That's right! But, as Bill says, we can be fooled into thinking the other way. I suppose if we had lived in Germany many some years ago we might have been tempted for awhile to think that Hitler's way was right, because he kept winning.

RUTH: But in the end he lost. And if you watch the world's evil leaders long enough, the result is always the same. They can't win.

LEADER: We must remind ourselves that it's the followers of God who always win, when we're in a situation that might cause us to forget. It takes the spirit called for in the hymn "Who Is on the Lord's Side?" Let's sing that hymn, number 228, right now.

(All sing hymn)

BILL: Here is another way of looking at it that bothers me sometimes. Isn't it possible to be evil and, if you are clever enough, to hide it so that no one will ever know?

LEADER: That's a side of the problem that hits us all a little harder. The Hitlers usually suffer a tragic downfall. But can one of us, who are never likely to yield to evil in so evident a way, hide an evil spirit under a respectable appearance outside?

There is one of the Psalms that expresses the feelings of a man troubled with such thoughts. Nancy, please turn to Psalm 139 and read the first half of it.

(Nancy reads Psalm 139:1-12)

LEADER: What do you make of that?

JIM: There were two from whom he couldn't hide: God, and himself.

RUTH: Yes, and if he couldn't fool God and himself, there wasn't much use in fooling a few friends and neighbors.

SHIRLEY: I'll bet he couldn't fool those who knew him best, anyway. But isn't the real point of it that we should be strong enough to fight the inner battle? What a horrible thing to make room within one's own heart for the devil!

LEADER: The poet George Heath must have been thinking of that when he wrote "My Soul, Be on Thy Guard." I believe that's in our hymnal too.

(All sing hymn 223)

BILL: There's just one more part of the problem that troubled me. I'd like to discuss the relation of evil and suffering. I suppose evil men suffer. But the good often suffer too, sometimes in extreme ways. If that is so, does goodness pay?

LEADER: Yes, the Bible makes it clear that good men will not always be free from suffering. But notice the difference between the suffering of good men and men of evil. The Apostle Paul suffered, but think of the contentment in his heart. Nancy, please turn to St. Paul's second letter to the church at Corinth and read part of the 12th chapter.

(Nancy reads II Corinthians 12:7-10)

LEADER: Now compare that idea of suffering with the torture Judas must have

felt when he betrayed Christ, or the uneasy conscience of Pilate when he turned Jesus over to his enemies to be crucified. Paul's suffering drew him closer to Christ. The suffering of an evil conscience leads only to remorse and self-torture unless the sufferer goes to God.

RUTH: Isn't that what the writer of the epistle to the Hebrews meant when he wrote that Jesus "for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame"?

JIM: It makes me think, too, of the Christian martyrs. They also suffered, but what a difference they must have had inside from the men who suffered as a result of their evil deeds.

SHIRLEY: Do you remember our pastor's sermon last Sunday? He was speaking of the sufferings of the Christians in Germany and of the missionaries who were imprisoned by the Communists. We will never know how much some of them suffered. Yet none of them would have changed places with those whose evil deeds caused their suffering.

BILL: I guess that our discussion has helped. We have found the answers. Whenever we face some problem of evil, God's Word and the way of life which Jesus showed to us provides the answer.

I was looking through the prayers in our hymnal and found two that I thought to be particularly helpful to us. Let's pray together, using number 55 and number 58. You'll find them on pages 373 and 374 in the hymnal.

(All unite in prayer)

LEADER: Do you know the hymn "O Love That Wilt Not Let Me Go?" That is a good one to sing as we close our meeting.

(All sing hymn 202)

● One of the holiest habits man can have, and one necessary to survival, is the habit of thinking, instead of repeating slogans. Slogans rot the mind. A person can go on repeating accepted slogans in the political and religious field, with no more disturbance of gray matter than it takes to repeat "Polly wants a cracker."—*Simeon Stylites, Christian Century.*

- | | YES | NO | |
|-----|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There is really no such thing as evil. All we need is more education. |
| 2. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Bible characters who led evil lives as a rule felt God's judgment. |
| 3. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | God punishes evil because he likes to see the evil-doer suffer. |
| 4. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | The good never suffer. |
| 5. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | There is a difference between the suffering of good men and the suffering of evil men. |
| 6. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | No man is so evil that it becomes completely impossible for God to forgive him. |
| 7. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | If a man can hide an evil nature from his neighbors that is all that matters. |
| 8. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Some men are so good that they never become tempted by evil in any way. |
| 9. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | Jesus is the only person who never yielded to evil. |
| 10. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | God's power, shown through Christ's victory over death, can free us from the punishment brought about by evil. |

ANSWERS: Yes—2, 5, 6, 9, 10. No—1, 3, 4, 7, 8.

These horses are "meek."



MEEK isn't WEAK

Palm Sunday Topic **shows it takes strong character to be meek**

by Ralph W. Bagger

Important notice to leader

This article is written for you *only*. Its purpose is to guide you in leading the Luther League meeting. While you are expected to lead carefully everything that is written here, none of it—as you will soon see—can be read to the group. This is just a guide. You are on your own!

For the opening worship

This is Palm Sunday, so let's begin by singing one of the long-time favorites for this day, "All Glory, Laud, and Honor!" The hymn has been sung by Christians for more than 1,100 years. It is hymn 86 in the *CSB*, 37 in the *CYH*, and 70 in the *PSH*.

Following the traditional pattern, we'll read the Palm Sunday story from the Bible (Matthew 21: 1-11). Let's read it from the Authorized (King James) Version, since it uses the word "meek" that we're going to talk about.

And then something a little different. In our Service of Holy Communion, the Palm Sunday "Hosanna" is set to music, supposedly composed by Johann Sebastian Bach. You'll find it (called "The Sanctus") on page 23 in the front of the music edition of the *CSB*. Let's sing it together.

Our responsive reading is the Beatitudes, which also contain the word "meek." The Beatitudes are in the *CYH* on page 359, and in the *CSB* (music edition) on page 215 (Canticle 11).

For the topic

It's a fascinating thing to compare different copies of the Bible. Some are as big as an unabridged dictionary. Some are small enough to fit into a vest pocket. Some are so old that the pages are yellowed and crumbling, some so new you can still smell the printer's ink.

And it's interesting to study the words in the Bible. Various men down through the centuries have used different words to express the same ideas.

In this topic, we shall study three verses from the Gospel of St. Matthew. They are 5:5, 11:29, and 21:5. Each of these passages in the Authorized Version contains this troublesome word, "meek."

Now then—who are the meek?

It might be well to explain to the group that we are going to undertake a different sort of Bible study at this meeting. We shall attempt to understand what the word "meek" means as it is used in the Bible, and particularly in these three verses in Matthew.

Perhaps you'll want to read the three verses to the leaguers, explaining that you are reading from the Authorized

(King James) Version.

MATTHEW 5: 5—Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.

MATTHEW 11: 29—Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

MATTHEW 21: 5—Tell ye the daughter of Sion, "Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass."

Now point out to the group a table on which you have placed copies of as many different versions of the Bible as you could lay your hands on. This should have been quite an intensive search, including (with permission) your pastor's library, your Sunday school library, and the public library. For additional versions, ask your Sunday school superintendent and teachers, your league advisors, and perhaps a Roman Catholic friend (to obtain a copy of the Douay Version).

You should have been able to locate at least these versions:

The Authorized or King James Version.

The English Revised Version.

The American Standard Version.

The Revised Standard Version (RSV).

The Roman Catholic or Douay Version.

The Holy Bible, a New Translation, by James Moffatt.

The Complete Bible, An American Translation, Smith and Goodspeed.

The New Testament in Modern Speech, by Richard F. Weymouth.

The Gospels translated into Modern English, by J. B. Phillips.

Other versions in addition to these will be helpful, so get all you can! And a good English dictionary will also be needed.

Now divide the leaguers into three groups. Assign to each group *one* of the three verses from Matthew, and tell it that it is to make an intensive study of that one verse, together with the passage from which it is taken, in all of the Bible versions available. It is to attempt to arrive at an answer to the question, "*Who are the meek?*"

Suggest that each group choose a chairman to direct the discussion, and a secretary to make notes of the group's findings. Give the groups 15 or 20 minutes

for their studies. During this time you should go from group to group and make yourself available to answer any questions about procedure.

The following helps for each group may be clipped and distributed to the group leaders.

Group one—Blessed are the meek

In that portion of the Sermon on the Mount which we call the Beatitudes, Jesus said, "Blessed are the *meek*, for they shall inherit the earth." What did He mean by that?

What is meekness? Does it mean that we should grovel in the dirt before our friends and/or our enemies? Does it mean that we should just sit back and take it, no matter what people do to us. Should we never stand up for our own rights?

In Matthew 5:5, AV, RSV, and Douay all use the word "meek." Others use different words. Moffat says "humble," and Goodspeed translates it "humble-minded." Some use the word "gentle."

But listen to J. B. Phillips: "Happy are those who claim nothing, for the whole earth will belong to them!"

F. W. Crofts, in *The Four Gospels in One Story*, puts it this way: "How happy are those who aren't aggressive, who don't stand on their dignity nor insist on their rights! They triumph even in earthly things."

Perhaps there is a difference in being meek before God and before men. Meekness before God implies humility, being willing to submit to the will of God. Xenophon, the Greek historian, used this same word to describe war horses—they were well-disciplined, tractable, trained to respond with eagerness to the slightest touch. Meekness before men, however, may mean something quite different.

In Numbers 12:3, Moses is referred to as "meek." And yet look at the description of him in Exodus 32:19-20. What made the difference?

We think of Jesus as meek—but turn to John 2:13-17. You might also want to look up Psalm 37:11, which was the source of Jesus' saying.

In the French translation by Louis Segond, this verse begins, "*Heureux les debonnaire!*" We hardly think of a Christian as being "debonnaire," but perhaps the budding scholars in your group can break that word down into three, "de bon air"—of a good air, of a good spirit.

Is that what Jesus meant—"Blessed are those who have a good spirit, a right spirit



Thy king cometh unto thee, meek . . .

in their attitude toward God and in their dealings with men?" What do you think?

Group two—For I am meek

This quotation from Matthew is one of the most familiar of all of Jesus' sayings. The AV puts it this way: "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am *meek* and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

Handel set these words to beautiful music in his *Messiah*. Perhaps you could get a recording and play this portion, or get one of your choir members to sing it for you.

When you compare the various Bible versions of this passage (Matthew 11:28-30), you will find less difference in translation. AV and Douay use the word "meek." Most of the others translate it as "gentle." But perhaps you can find some other interpretations.

Sometimes Jesus *was* very gentle and mild—as a Baby in the manger, to be sure; also when He took the little children up in His arms and blessed them, although even that was the result of a rather strong disagreement with His disciples.

Yet look up Matthew 23:13-33, and see the strong language Jesus uses about the scribes and Pharisees. Or think of Jesus enduring the suffering and horror of the trial and torture and crucifixion. He was hardly the sissy we see in so many pictures. He was a Man, strong and manly and with a temper.

In this particular passage, however, Jesus is speaking to sinners, sinners just like us. He wants to make it clear that His attitude toward

sinners is one of gentleness, if they are willing to mend their ways.

In the third stanza of the hymn, "Follow the Gleam" (CYH 230), we find these words:

"But the light of Thy holy face,
All glorious and stong and meek."

Jesus is "glorious, and strong, and meek" all at the same time.

Group three—Thy King cometh . . . meek

Group three is going to study the Palm Sunday story as told in Matthew 21:1-11, and especially the verse, "Tell ye the daughter of Sion, 'Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, *meek*, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.'"

You'll want to look up the story in the other gospels, too (Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:29-40; John 12:12-19). You'll also want to look up Zechariah 9:9, which is the passage that Matthew quotes in 21:5.

The different translations use a number of words to describe Jesus as He rode into Jerusalem, including "meek," "humble," "gentle," and "lowly." What do these words mean? ("You might check a dictionary.) How do they apply to Jesus?

In the Jewish Publication Society's translation of *The Holy Scriptures*, the verse in Zechariah is translated: "Behold, thy king cometh unto thee. He is triumphant, and victorious, lowly, and riding upon an ass." How could Jesus be "triumphant" and "victorious" and "lowly" all at the same time?

How do we welcome our heroes today? With a ticker-tape parade up Broadway. How would Jesus have acted under those circum-

stances? Would He have been happy in a Cadillac?

Jesus was meek. Yet perhaps His meekness was different than what we usually think. We are to pattern ourselves on Jesus. How? Perhaps two stanzas from one of our Palm Sunday hymns (CSB 87) will help us:

"O may that mind in us be formed
Which shone so bright in Thee,
An humble, meek, and lowly mind,
From pride and envy free.

"May we to others stoop, and learn
To emulate Thy love;

So shall we bear Thine image here,
And share Thy throne above."

"Thy King cometh unto thee, meek . . ."
May our meekness, like His, be a manly meekness.

Other Bible passages

If one of the groups finishes ahead of time, you might suggest these additional passages from the Bible for reference and study:

Psalm 22:26; Psalm 25:9; Isaiah 11:4; Isaiah 61:1; Zephaniah 2:3; I Corinthians 4:21; Galatians 5:22-25; Colossians 3:12-14; I Peter 3:4.

These verses may also be used for daily Bible readings if desired. A search through a complete concordance will reveal other verses using the words "meek" and "meekness."

Now, who are the meek?

After the 20-minute period has ended, the three groups should be called together to report on their findings. The secretary of each group should summarize briefly the conclusions that his group has reached, and then answer in a few words this question, "Who are the meek?"

Following the three reports, you should tie it all together. Pick out the best ideas from each of the three reports. Give your answer to the question. Be sure to distinguish between meekness before God

and meekness before man. Point out that while meekness includes submission to God's will, it also includes proclaiming God's will to men! You might conclude by reading for the group Matthew 11:25-30 (AV).

Closing worship

The time has come for the offering. Remind the leaguers that proclaiming God's will to the world requires their money as well as their time and devotion!

Following the offering, you may wish to use this prayer:

O God, Whose blessed Son didst at this time come in great humility to the city where He was to suffer and die; great is Thy goodness and power, Who didst not leave Him in the grave forsaken, but didst raise Him up and highly exalt Him and give Him the name that is above every name. Forbid, O merciful Father, that we in this time should betray the cause of Christ, putting private gain before the welfare of the people and the things that make for peace. Unite us with those who have accepted Him as Saviour and Lord and pledge their allegiance to His kingdom.

"And we beseech Thee, give us grace so to follow His teaching and example that we may further His entry into every realm of life, and have a part in His triumph over the forces of darkness and destruction. Hear this our prayer, O Thou Who art able to keep us from falling and to present us without blemish before the presence of Thy glory; and unto Thee be glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

(E. F. Tittle, *A Book of Pastoral Prayers*)

The Lord's Prayer may then be prayed (not "said" or "repeated" or "recited," but "prayed").

The final hymn might be "Ride on! Ride on in Majesty!" (CSB 88, CYH 38), or "When, O His Salvation Bringing" (CSB 546, PSH 71).

And then, for you, a silent prayer of thanks to God for His help to you in leading this meeting.

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● Sagacious Lloyd George once declared no quarrel should ever be converted into a policy. Our statesmen in Washington might well consider whether that is not exactly what America is doing. Our present international policy seems to be centered on debating Communism, refuting it. Isn't it time we stopped bickering and began an insistent, persistent, consistent campaign to *inspire* the people of the world with the things we believe in—and let the Communists do the worrying? . . . Instead of tripping over our feet trying to pull down Communist banners, let's hold high our banners—at the head of the parade.—J. Ollie Edmunds.